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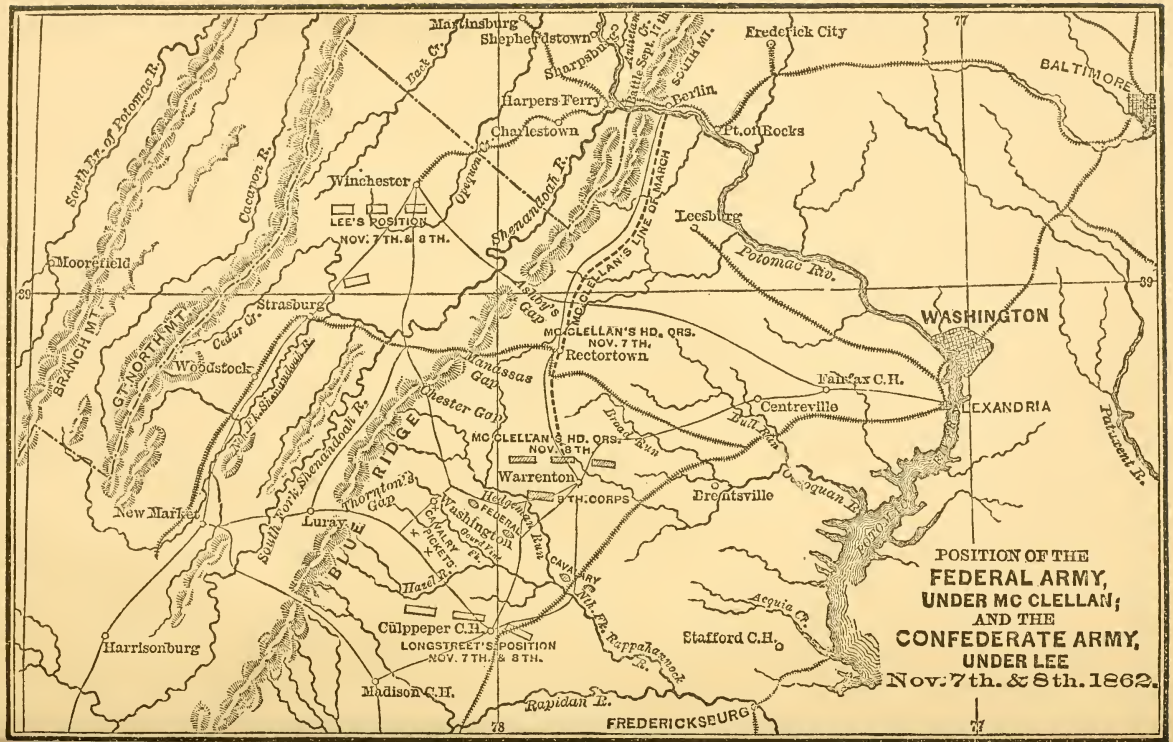
Martinsburg
Shepherdstown
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Battle Sept. 17, 62
South Mt.
BALTIMORE
Harpers Ferry
Berlin
Charlestown
Pt. of Rocks
Winchester
LEE'S POSITION
NOV. 7TH. & 8TH.
Opequon
Shenandoah R.
Leesburg
Potomac Rvr.
Moorefield
Strasburg
Ashby's Gap
McCLELLAN'S LINE OF MARCH
WASHINGTON
McCLELLAN'S HD. QRS.
NOV. 7TH.
Rectortown
Woodstock
Manassas Gap
Chester Gap
Fairfax C.H.
Centreville
EXANDRIA
Broad Run
Bull Run
McCLELLAN'S HD. QRS.
NOV. 8TH.
Warrenton
9TH. CORPS
Occoquan R.
Brentsville
New Market
Luray
Thornton's Gap
Hedgeman R.
FEDERAL
CAVALRY
Hazel R.
Culpepper C.H.
LONGSTREET'S POSITION
NOV. 7TH. & 8TH.
Harrisonburg
Madison C.H.
Rapidan R.
Acquia Cr.
Stafford C.H.
Wm. R. Rappahannock R.
FREDERICKSBURG
POSITION OF THE
FEDERAL ARMY,
UNDER MC CLELLAN;
AND THE
CONFEDERATE ARMY,
UNDER LEE
Nov. 7th. & 8th. 1862.

McCLELLAN'S LAST SERVICE TO THE REPUBLIC,

TOGETHER WITH

A TRIBUTE TO HIS MEMORY.

BY

GEORGE TICKNOR CURTIS.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THREE of the papers in this volume were originally published in the "North American Review," for April, May, and June, 1880. They are now republished by permission of the editor and proprietor of that magazine. The fourth paper is a tribute to the memory of the late General McClellan, which was first published in "The Star," at New York, November 18, 1885. A few notes are added to this edition, distinguished, as to the time of their being written, by inclosure in brackets. The entire contents of this volume are under the protection of copyright.

Every statement of a fact, contained in these pages, which was not founded on General McClellan's official report of his campaigns, or derived from some other public source, was given to me orally by the General in the spring of 1880, and

was written down by me at the time. At my request, he superintended the preparation of the map which shows his position and that of the Confederate troops on the 7th and 8th of November, 1862, and compared it with the military maps issued by the Government after the close of the civil war.—General McClellan died at his home in Orange, N. J., on the 29th of October, 1885.

G. T. C.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *December 1, 1885.*

McCLELLAN'S LAST SERVICE TO THE REPUBLIC.

PART I.

A FULL history of General McClellan's services to the country, from the time when he led the Army of the Potomac to a position of safety on the James River at Harrison's Landing, to the transfer of that army to General Pope's command, and thence to the battle of Antietam, has never been written. In that part of McClellan's official report which covers this period, there is hardly more than a skeleton of events, made up of dispatches and letters, connected by a thread of narrative, in which the personal interviews, the oral communications, the anecdotes, and the acts of individuals, are for the most part wanting. That singularly dramatic scene, which witnessed the withdrawal of McClellan's army from the James, the defeat and disorderly retreat of Pope, McClel-

lan's resumption of the command at the sudden and unexpected request of President Lincoln, his restoration of order, his provisions for the safety of Washington, his march into northern Maryland, his repulse of Lee, his advance into Virginia, and his recall at the moment when his preparations had been so made that nothing could probably have stayed his entrance into Richmond, is now to be described. Of the four principal actors in this remarkable drama, Lincoln, Stanton, Halleck, and McClellan, the last alone survives.* In what we shall say of the conduct of each of the three others toward the general who saved the capital, we may present to our readers unexpected explanations of many things which they have been accustomed to view differently, or which have remained hitherto in obscurity. They will understand, however, that we do not speak at random, and that we do not ask for their belief without having had ample means for forming our own.

The present narrative will commence at the point of time when General McClellan delivered personally into the hands of President Lincoln a letter on the general subject of the war, which has long been public, and which has been the subject

* Written and first published in April, 1880. General McClellan died suddenly, October 29, 1885.

of much criticism. The true history of that letter we are able to give. While General McClellan was encamped on the Chickahominy, in June, 1862, awaiting the re-enforcements which he so much needed for his advance on Richmond, he said in a telegraphic dispatch to the President, relating to other matters, "I would be glad to lay before your Excellency, by letter or telegraph, my views as to the present state of military affairs throughout the whole country." The President answered on the next day, as follows: "If it would not divert too much of your time and attention from the army under your immediate command, I would be glad to have your views as to the present state of military affairs throughout the country, as you say you would be glad to give them. I would rather it should be by letter than by telegraph, because of the better chance of secrecy." To this General McClellan replied that under the circumstances he would defer for the present the communication he desired to make. It was, however, only deferred. General McClellan felt that what he desired to say to the President was too important to be forborne, but he postponed the preparation of his letter until a more convenient time.

On the 25th of June (1862), McClellan, closely pressed by the enemy, whose force amounted, according to his best information, to two hundred

thousand men, telegraphed to Stanton, the Secretary of War, as follows:

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,
CAMP LINCOLN, *June* 25, 1862—6.15 P. M.

I have just returned from the field, and found your dispatch in regard to Jackson.

Several contrabands, just in, give information confirming supposition that Jackson's advance is at or near Hanover Court-House, and that Beauregard arrived, with strong re-enforcements, in Richmond yesterday.

I incline to think that Jackson will attack my right and rear. The rebel force is stated at (200,000) two hundred thousand, including Jackson and Beauregard. I shall have to contend against vastly superior odds if these reports be true. But this army will do all in the power of men to hold their position and repulse any attack.

I regret my great inferiority in numbers, but feel that I am in no way responsible for it, as I have not failed to represent, repeatedly, the necessity of re-enforcements; that this was the decisive point, and that all the available means of the Government should be concentrated here. I will do all that a general can do, with the splendid army I have the honor to command, and, if it is destroyed by overwhelming numbers, can at least die with it, and share its fate.

But, if the result of the action which will probably occur to-morrow, or within a short time, is a disaster, the responsibility can not be thrown on my shoulders; it must rest where it belongs.

Since I commenced this, I have received additional intelligence, confirming the supposition in regard to Jackson's movements and Beauregard's arrival. I shall probably be attacked to-morrow, and now go to the other side of the Chickahominy, to arrange for the defense on that side. I feel that there is no use in my again asking for re-enforcements.

G. B. McClellan, *Major-General.*

Edwin M. Stanton, *Secretary of War.*

On the 26th, the day upon which McClellan had fixed for his final advance, although the re-enforcements which he had so earnestly and repeatedly called for had been withheld from him, he was attacked by the enemy in strong force on his right. He was thus compelled to turn his attention to the protection of his communications and depots of supply. "This," he says in his report, "was a bitter confirmation of the military judgment which had been reiterated to my military superiors from the inception and through the progress of the Peninsular campaign." Then followed The Seven Days, through which he fought his way for a change of base to the James River, in a series of desperate conflicts, in every one of which the Confederates were baffled, until, on the night of the 3d of July, the last of the wagon-trains reached the new base at Harrison's Landing, and the wearied Army of the Potomac, which had battled with such

heroic endurance under his skillful guidance, rested in security, protected by their own batteries and the gunboats which lay in the river. The three following days were occupied by McClellan in strengthening and guarding his position, and in a fruitless telegraphic correspondence with the President, to convince the latter that re-enforcements ought to be sent to him, so that he could advance on Richmond from the James. "To re-enforce you," said Mr. Lincoln, "so as to enable you to resume the offensive within a month, or even six weeks, is impossible. . . . Under these circumstances, the defensive, for the present, must be your only care. Save the army, first, where you are, if you can; and, secondly, by removal, if you must."

While the Army of the Potomac was thus resting in the defensive at Harrison's Landing, General McClellan wrote to the President, on the 7th of July, the letter which he had obtained permission to write. It is but fair to take his own account of the motives which actuated him in making this communication to the President. "While General-in-Chief," he said in his report, "and directing the operations of all our armies in the field, I had become deeply impressed with the importance of adopting and carrying out certain views regarding the conduct of the war, which, in my judgment, were essential to its objects and success. During

an active campaign of three months in the enemy's country, these were so fully confirmed that I conceived it a duty, in the critical position we then occupied, not to withhold a candid expression of the more important of these views from the Commander-in-Chief whom the Constitution places at the head of the armies and navies, as well as of the Government of the nation." This letter, conceived in this spirit and privately delivered into the President's own hands, is the one that has been so long misrepresented as a political manifesto of General McClellan, intended to promote his personal prospects for the next Presidency.

The letter having been completed and signed, General McClellan was about to intrust it to the hands of General Marcy, his chief of staff, who was going to Washington, for delivery to the President, when intelligence was unexpectedly received that the President was coming down to Harrison's Landing. He arrived on or about the 8th of July. General McClellan went on board the steamer to receive the President, and, after they had been together a short time in the cabin, McClellan placed his letter in the President's hands. Mr. Lincoln read it through, folded it up, and, with no comment save the two words "All right," put it in his pocket. He remained at Harrison's Landing for forty-eight hours, in constant intercourse with McClellan of

the most confidential nature, and never once alluded to this letter with either commendation, criticism, censure, or complaint.* How this letter, never intended for publication as its context shows, came long afterward to be given to the newspaper press is not known. It was not done by General McClellan, or by his permission.

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,
CAMP NEAR HARRISON'S LANDING, VIRGINIA, *July* 7, 1862.

MR. PRESIDENT: You have been duly informed that the rebel army is in our front, with the purpose of overwhelming us by attacking our positions, or reducing us by blocking our river communications. I can not but regard our condition as critical, and I earnestly desire, in view of possible contingencies, to lay before your Excellency, for your private consideration, my general views concerning the existing state of the rebellion, although they do not strictly relate to the situation of this army, or strictly come within the scope of my official duties. These views amount to convictions, and are deeply impressed on my mind and heart. Our cause must never be abandoned;

* While Mr. Lincoln was on shore at Harrison's Landing, the soldiers exhibited no disposition to cheer him. In fact, the rank and file of the army received him very coldly. General McClellan caused the men to be told that the President should be cheered; and then he was cheered, but not with the slightest enthusiasm. The men felt too deeply that the Government had left them to encounter terrible perils, without proper support; and they also felt that, after all their exertions and endurance, they ought to be reinforced and allowed to resume the offensive for which they ardently longed.

it is the cause of free institutions and self-government. The Constitution and the Union must be preserved, whatever may be the cost in time, treasure, and blood. If secession is successful, other dissolutions are clearly to be seen in the future. Let neither military disaster, political faction, nor foreign war shake your settled purpose to enforce the equal operation of the laws of the United States upon the people of every State.

The time has come when the Government must determine upon a civil and military policy covering the whole ground of our national trouble. The responsibility of determining, declaring, and supporting such civil and military policy, and of directing the whole course of national affairs in regard to the rebellion, must now be assumed and exercised by you, or our cause will be lost. The Constitution gives you power sufficient even for the present terrible exigency.

This rebellion has assumed the character of a war; as such it should be regarded, and it should be conducted upon the highest principles known to Christian civilization. It should not be a war looking to the subjugation of the people of any State, in any event. It should not be at all a war upon populations, but against armed forces and political organizations. Neither confiscation of property, political executions of persons, territorial organization of States, nor forcible abolition of slavery should be contemplated for a moment. In prosecuting the war, all private property and unarmed persons should be strictly protected, subject only to the necessity of military opera-

tions. All private property taken for military use should be paid or receipted for; pillage and waste should be treated as high crimes; all unnecessary trespass sternly prohibited, and offensive demeanor by the military toward citizens promptly rebuked. Military arrests should not be tolerated, except in places where active hostilities exist, and oaths not required by enactments constitutionally made should be neither demanded nor received. Military government should be confined to the preservation of public order and the protection of political rights. Military power should not be allowed to interfere with the relations of servitude, either by supporting or impairing the authority of the master, except for repressing disorder, as in other cases. Slaves contraband under the act of Congress, seeking military protection, should receive it. The right of the Government to appropriate permanently to its own service claims to slave-labor should be asserted, and the right of the owner to compensation therefor should be recognized.

This principle might be extended, upon grounds of military necessity and security, to all the slaves within a particular State, thus working manumission in such State; and in Missouri, perhaps in Western Virginia also, and possibly even in Maryland, the expediency of such a measure is only a question of time.

A system of policy thus constitutional and conservative, and pervaded by the influences of Christianity and freedom, would receive the support of almost all truly loyal men, would deeply impress the rebel masses and all

foreign nations, and it might be humbly hoped that it would commend itself to the favor of the Almighty.

Unless the principles governing the future conduct of our struggle shall be made known and approved, the effort to obtain requisite forces will be almost hopeless. A declaration of radical views, especially upon slavery, will rapidly disintegrate our present armies.

The policy of the Government must be supported by concentrations of military power. The national forces should not be dispersed in expeditions, posts of occupation, and numerous armies, but should be mainly collected into masses, and brought to bear upon the armies of the Confederate States. Those armies thoroughly defeated, the political structure which they support would soon cease to exist.

In carrying out any system of policy which you may form, you will require a commander-in-chief of the army —one who possesses your confidence, understands your views, and who is competent to execute your orders by directing the military forces of the nation to the accomplishment of the objects by you proposed. I do not ask that place for myself. I am willing to serve you in such position as you may assign me, and I will do so as faithfully as ever subordinate served superior.

I may be on the brink of eternity, and, as I hope for forgiveness from my Maker, I have written this letter with sincerity toward you, and from love for my country.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

G. B. McCLELLAN.

His Excellency, A. LINCOLN, President.

The President returned to Washington, carrying with him General McClellan's letter, on or about the 10th of July, undecided as to the future military operations. The dispatches which followed his return are very important. On the 12th McClellan telegraphed to him: "I am more and more convinced that this army ought not to be withdrawn from here, but promptly re-enforced and thrown again upon Richmond. If we have little more than half a chance, we can take it. I dread the effects of any retreat upon the *morale* of my men." Again, on the 17th he telegraphed to the President: "I have consulted fully with General Burnside, and would commend to your favorable consideration the general's plan for bringing seven additional regiments from North Carolina, by leaving Newbern to the care of the gunboats. It appears manifestly to be our policy to concentrate here everything we can possibly spare from less important points, to make sure of crushing the enemy at Richmond, which seems clearly to be the most important point in rebeldom. Nothing should be left to chance here. I would recommend that General Burnside, with all his troops, be ordered to this army, to enable it to assume the offensive as soon as possible." On the 18th he repeated this advice, adding: "Am anxious to have determination of Government, that no time may be lost in

preparing for it. Hours are very precious now, and perfect unity of action necessary."

Ten days passed away, and still no decision had been made at Washington. On the 28th McClellan telegraphed to Halleck, the General-in-Chief: "My opinion is more and more firm that here is the defense of Washington, and that I should be re-enforced at once by all available troops, to enable me to advance. Retreat would be disastrous to the army and the cause. I am confident of that." On the 30th he again telegraphed to Halleck: "I hope it may soon be decided what is to be done by this army; and that the decision may be to re-enforce it at once. We are losing much valuable time, and that at a moment when energy and decision are sadly needed."

We must pause here to explain that, at the time of this indecision on the part of the Government, the question was whether the enemy should be attacked by McClellan advancing on Richmond, and be thereby confined to the defense of *his* capital, or whether he should be allowed to advance on Washington by way of Fredericksburg, thus compelling the Federal Government to defend *their* capital. As a military question, considering the comparative advantages of attack and defense, and the dangers that would follow from a defeat of the Federal forces in the front of Washington, there was not

much room for doubt. If McClellan were to be reenforced and ordered to attack Richmond, the troops of the Confederates would have to be concentrated for its defense. If McClellan had been defeated in this attempt, his defeat must have cost the enemy so much that he could hardly have been in a condition to seriously menace Washington before a sufficient force could have been interposed for its defense. McClellan, be it observed, did not ask for all the forces that were at the disposal of his Government; he asked for all that were "available," which he explained to mean "everything that we can possibly spare from less important points"—a meaning that the military authorities in Washington must have understood. On the other hand, if McClellan's army were to be withdrawn from the James, the enemy would be practically invited to advance on Washington; and, if he should defeat the Federal armies gathered in front of that capital, it would be in a great peril. A vast deal, too, would depend upon the commander who was to be intrusted with the defense of Washington, in case the Army of the Potomac should be withdrawn from the James, thus encouraging the enemy to stake his utmost efforts upon a great battle, or a series of battles, in front of the Federal capital. At the time when this momentous decision was to be made by our Government, they contemplated a

reliance upon General Pope to encounter General Lee; and to encounter Lee, not after he had been crippled by a previous contest with McClellan, but in the full strength which would remain to him without that contest. It is impossible, therefore, to read McClellan's dispatches at this period of the President's indecision, without being impressed by the conviction that McClellan was right in his military judgment, even if we do not look forward to what actually followed. The elements for a sound determination were as patent to the authorities in Washington, between the 10th of July and the 6th of August, as they were to McClellan. But, unfortunately, other counsels prevailed over his.

Between the 30th of July and the 3d of August the enemy made some attempts to feel McClellan's position, by demonstrations with light batteries, but they were driven back toward Petersburg, and Coggin's Point, on the south side of the James, was occupied on the same day by McClellan, and fortified. On that day also he sent forward a force of cavalry on the south side of the river, which drove back a body of five hundred of the enemy's cavalry in confusion. His whole position on the James was now therefore secure, and he was in a condition to advance, if he could have Burnside, whom he again asked for on the 2d of August. "Give me Burn-

side," he telegraphed to Halleck, "and I will stir these people up."

On the 30th of July the Government was apparently still undecided, but, from the tenor of Halleck's dispatches of that day and the next, McClellan had some reason to expect orders to advance on Richmond. Thus on the 30th Halleck sent two dispatches. The first said: "A dispatch just received from General Pope says that deserters report that the enemy is moving south of James River, and that the force in Richmond is very small. I suggest that he be pressed in that direction, so as to ascertain the facts of the case." But again, on the 30th, Halleck telegraphed, rather ambiguously: "In order to enable you to move in any direction, it is necessary to relieve you of your sick. The Surgeon-General has therefore been directed to make arrangements for them at other places, and the Quartermaster-General to provide transportation. I hope you will send them away as quickly as possible, and advise me of their removal." And, on the 31st, Halleck telegraphed, "General Pope again telegraphs that the enemy is reported to be evacuating Richmond, and falling back on Danville and Lynchburg." These were the only data McClellan then had, from which to form an opinion as to the intentions of the Government. They had, in fact, at this time, no fixed intentions, but the dis-

patches looked as if McClellan might be allowed to advance.

On the 4th of August, General Hooker, by General McClellan's orders, advanced with a large force to Malvern Hill, a strong position of the Confederates fourteen and three quarter miles distant from Richmond, and drove the forces of the enemy back toward New Market. Malvern Hill controlled the direct approach to Richmond. It was equally necessary to occupy it, for a time, whether Richmond was to be attacked by McClellan from the James, or whether he was to be ordered to abandon the Peninsula. On the 5th McClellan was himself at Malvern Hill, and thence he telegraphed to Halleck at 1 P. M.: "This is a very advantageous position to cover an advance on Richmond, and only fourteen and three quarter miles distant, and I feel confident that, with re-enforcements, I could march this army there in five days." To this there came the answer from Halleck, on the 6th, "I have no re-enforcements to send you."

The correspondence at this time shows the utmost impatience on the part of Halleck to have the retrograde movement begin, and the utmost exertions of McClellan to comply with his orders. By day and by night McClellan carried on his operations for the removal of the sick by all the means of transportation at his command. On

the subject of the withdrawal of the army, it is necessary to follow this correspondence carefully. The determination of the Government to withdraw the army from the Peninsula was made known by a telegram which Halleck sent on the 3d and which McClellan received on the 4th. In this dispatch Halleck said: "You will take immediate measures to effect this, covering the movement the best you can. Its real object and withdrawal should be concealed even from your own officers. Your *matériel* and transportation should be removed first. You will assume control of all the means of transportation within your reach, and apply to the naval forces for all the assistance they can render you. . . . The entire execution of the movement is left to your discretion."

"I proceeded," says McClellan, "to obey this order with all possible rapidity, firmly impressed, however, with the conviction that the withdrawal of the Army of the Potomac from Harrison's Landing, where its communications had, by the co-operation of the gunboats, been rendered perfectly secure, would at that time have the most disastrous effect upon our cause. I did not, as the commander of that army, allow the occasion to pass without distinctly setting forth my views upon the subject to the authorities." The very impressive dispatch in which McClellan, on the 4th, placed before the

General-in-Chief the whole of the military argument against the order for the removal of his army is too lengthy to be quoted in full, but it was remarkable for the cogency of its reasoning and the simple earnestness of its tone. It reads now like prophecy, but like the prophecy of one who was too sincerely anxious for the success of the cause to be gratified in the end by the fulfillment of his predictions. Yet he did not refrain, as a patriot should not have refrained, from letting the Government understand plainly what he plainly foresaw. "Your telegram of last evening," he said to Halleck, "is received. I must confess that it has caused me the greatest pain I ever experienced, for I am convinced that the order to withdraw this army to Aquia Creek will prove disastrous to our cause. I fear it will be a fatal blow. Several days are necessary to complete the preparations for so important a movement as this, and while they are in progress I beg that careful consideration may be given to my statements." He then enters into the argument, showing that, with his army then in excellent discipline and condition, he was only twenty-five miles from Richmond, and that the gunboats could supply the army by water during its advance to within twelve miles of that capital, whereas the result of the retrograde movement that had been ordered would be a march of one hundred and

forty-five miles to reach the same point, and without the aid of the gunboats and water transportation.* He then concludes as follows:

Add to this the certain demoralization of this army which would ensue, the terribly depressing effect upon the people of the North, and the strong probability that it would influence foreign powers to recognize our adversaries, and there appear to me sufficient reasons to make it my imperative duty to urge, in the strongest terms afforded by our language, that this order may be rescinded, and that, far from recalling this army, it be promptly reinforced to enable it to assume the offensive.

It may be said that there are no re-enforcements available. I point to Burnside's force; to that of Pope, not necessary to maintain a strict defensive in front of Washington and Harper's Ferry; to those portions of the Army of the West not required for a strict defensive there. Here, directly in front of this army, is the heart of the rebellion; it is here that all our resources should be collected to strike the blow which will determine the fate of the nation. All points of secondary importance elsewhere should be abandoned, and every available man brought here. A decided victory here, and the military strength of the rebellion is crushed; it matters not what partial reverses we may meet with elsewhere. Here is the true de-

* Aquia Creek would be seventy-five miles from Richmond, with only land transportation all the way. From Harrison's Landing to Fortress Monroe would be a land march of seventy miles.

fense of Washington; it is here, on the banks of the James, that the fate of the Union should be decided.

Clear in my convictions of right, strong in the consciousness that I have ever been, and still am, actuated solely by love of my country, knowing that no ambitious or selfish motives have influenced me from the commencement of this war, I do now, what I never did in my life before—I entreat that this order may be rescinded.

If my counsel does not prevail, I will with a sad heart obey your orders to the utmost of my power, directing to the movement, which I clearly foresee will be one of the utmost delicacy and difficulty, whatever skill I may possess.

Whatever the result may be, and may God grant that I am mistaken in my forebodings, I shall at least have the internal satisfaction that I have written and spoken frankly, and have sought to do the best in my power to avert disaster from my country.

GEORGE B. McCLELLAN,
Major-General commanding.

The answer of General Halleck was at first communicated by telegram, on the 5th, saying that the order would not be rescinded, and that it must be executed with all possible promptness. He promised, however, to reply more fully by mail; and on the 6th he wrote to McClellan a long letter, which set forth in detail the opposite argument and the reasons for the decision which had been made.

Without meaning to detract in any degree from the earnestness of General Halleck's convictions, and conceding that he had a difficult military predicament to deal with, in consequence of the division of the Federal forces and the opportunity for the enemy to fall upon McClellan or upon Pope, at his pleasure — a difficulty which General Halleck did not create—there is still one question that remains to be considered, and in reference to which the Government must be held to have made a fatal mistake.* When it had been determined to mass the Federal armies in front of Washington, the question of a commander, who was to be intrusted with the defense of Washington and with the advance upon Richmond, if haply a new advance of the united armies should prove to be practicable, was certainly one of the last importance. Why was not this command given to McClellan? This question may be asked, and it must be answered, without reference to any wishes that he may be supposed to have had on the subject. We do not know that he had any. But we do know, that when a government has a military command of the utmost importance to bestow, it will, if it is swayed

* It is almost too plain to require suggestion that if, on the one hand, the Confederates could fall upon McClellan and upon Pope separately, so also it was equally in the power of the Federal Government to divide and attack the Confederates, in separate masses, by ordering McClellan and Pope both to push toward Richmond.

by the only motives that are fit to govern it, select, of its own unprompted and unbiased accord, the General who is most fit for the exigency. It may be said with perfect truth that McClellan, at the moment when it was determined to concentrate both the Army of Virginia and the Army of the Potomac in front of Washington, was the only General within the reach of the Government who was qualified to take such a command.

From the President down, through the various ranks of politicians or soldiers by whom he was surrounded, all knew in their hearts that the only reason why McClellan had failed to reach Richmond, and been obliged to execute his flank movement to the James, was because McDowell had been arrested by express orders from Washington on his march to effect a junction with McClellan's right. Everybody knew that McClellan had handled his army with consummate skill, on that flank movement, and had saved it from a vastly superior force of the enemy; that under him that army had fought, on their perilous march, with almost unexampled bravery, preserving their discipline, and never once breaking into disorderly retreat, thus winning for their commander and themselves the applause and admiration of the most competent military judges at home and abroad. These were the patent facts that were before Mr. Lincoln and

his advisers, in regard to McClellan's Peninsular campaign. Previous to that campaign, they knew what he had achieved in the West, before he was called to Washington, and what he had done after he came to the capital, in creating, organizing, and disciplining the best army that the United States had hitherto ever had. In addition to all this, the Government at Washington had before them the very important fact that there was no general in their service who could inspire officers and men with such an attachment to his person, and such devotion to the cause for which they fought, as McClellan could, and always had from the first. They knew him also to be unselfish, never waiting for arrangements that would promote his own ambition, never making any conditions but such as the good of the service demanded. Yet McClellan was not asked to take this command.

Why was this? Must this question be answered by the suggestion that McClellan had written a letter to the President which had displeased him? It must be remembered that, at the time of which we are now speaking, the Harrison's Landing letter had not been made public, and that it could have been seen only by the few persons in Washington to whom Mr. Lincoln may have shown it. As will hereafter appear, there was at least one member of Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet who knew nothing of the

existence of this letter until the following winter. This gentleman, the Hon. Montgomery Blair, was, although not intimate with General McClellan, one of his steadiest supporters. It is probable, too, that Mr. Seward, the Secretary of State, who was always understood to hold General McClellan's military capacity and his patriotism in the highest estimation, knew nothing of this letter at this time. But there were other members of Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet, especially Mr. Chase and Mr. Stanton, who were exceedingly hostile to McClellan, to whom the President undoubtedly did show this letter, soon after he received it. If we are to conclude that Mr. Lincoln was personally displeased with General McClellan because he had written to him a private letter recommending a certain policy in the prosecution of the war, and that this was the reason why the command of the combined armies was not offered to McClellan, we are irresistibly forced to the conclusion that Mr. Lincoln allowed his personal feelings to prevent him from availing himself and the country of the services of a general, in comparison with whom General Pope was not to be named in the same century. On the other hand, it is impossible to regard McClellan's earnest advice, that the Army of the Potomac be permitted to remain at Harrison's Landing and be re-enforced for a new advance on Richmond, as any solid rea-

son for not offering to him the command of the combined forces when it had been determined to withdraw that army from the Peninsula. Everybody, the President included, knew that McClellan always did his whole duty, whoever shaped the campaigns, or however contrary the military policy of the Government might be to the dictates of his own judgment.

One thing, however, will be found to be true as we proceed, namely, that there was a malign influence over the President's counsels—an influence which had always been adverse to McClellan. We believe that Mr. Lincoln himself was not indisposed to place a very high degree of confidence in General McClellan's military ability and his patriotic devotion to the cause of the Union ; but, having allowed some of McClellan's bitterest enemies to see the private letter which McClellan had written to him, Mr. Lincoln put it in their power to do McClellan great injury. Ample as were Mr. Lincoln's opporunities for knowing McClellan, we do not think that he ever appreciated the straightforward sincerity and guilelessness of McClellan's nature. The two men were very unlike. The moral qualities which won the admiration and confidence of other men, and which were in so marked a degree united in McClellan with rare military abilities, we believe were not understood by President Lincoln. But

we are not at all disposed to adopt the theory that the Harrison's Landing letter gave Mr. Lincoln any personal offense; and, while we believe that he did not wish to do General McClellan injustice, we feel bound to relate the facts as they occurred, and to give them all the bearing which they should have upon a theory which has been suggested respecting the removal of McClellan from the command of the army after the battle of Antietam.

General McClellan remained at Harrison's Landing until the 16th of August, superintending and providing for the removal of his army, with its immense trains and equipage. On the afternoon of that day, everything being arranged for the departure of the different corps, he left with an escort, and overtook the troops that were marching toward Fortress Monroe. He passed the column, and arrived at that post on the 19th. On the 23d he proceeded with his staff to Aquia Creek, where he arrived at daybreak on the 24th. Thence he telegraphed to Halleck the position of his troops, adding: "Please inform me immediately exactly where Pope is, and what doing. Until I know that I can not regulate Porter's movements; he is much exposed now, and decided measures should be taken at once. Until I know what my command and position are to be, and whether you intend to place me in the command indicated in

your first letter to me, and orally through General Burnside at the Chickahominy, I can not decide where I can be of most use. If your determination is unchanged, I ought to go to Alexandria at once. Please define my position and duties." Halleck replied on the same day that he did not know where Pope was, or where the enemy in force was; he said nothing about McClellan's future position. But on the 26th he telegraphed to McClellan, "Perhaps you had better leave General Burnside in charge at Aquia Creek, and come to Alexandria, as very great irregularities are reported there." On the 27th, therefore, McClellan sailed for Alexandria. He left his cavalry escort at Fredericksburg for General Burnside. Every part of the army which he had lately commanded went forward to be under Pope's command. McClellan took with him nothing but his personal staff, a few orderlies, and the infantry guard of his headquarters, about five hundred men all told. He encamped with these at Alexandria, in a field near the river, about half a mile above the town, and reported for orders. There he was employed in forwarding troops and ammunition to Pope until the 30th. On the morning of that day, heavy artillery-firing was heard in the direction of Fairfax Court-House. In the afternoon, McClellan telegraphed in answer to Halleck: "I have no sharp-shooters except the guard around

my camp. I have sent off every man but these, and will now send them as you direct. I will also send my only remaining squadron of cavalry [now] with General Sumner. I can do no more. You now have every man of the Army of the Potomac who is within my reach."

Seated in his tent, with nothing more that he could do, McClellan was left by the Government to listen to the ominous preliminary sounds of the great battle that was then commencing, separated from the troops who had loved and obeyed him with almost unparalleled devotion, and who now terribly needed his guiding hand and his inspiring presence. It needs no words of ours to figure to the reader the situation of this faithful officer. As in all the great trials of his life, so now in this, perhaps the greatest to which he was ever subjected, his own feelings, expressed with his habitual frankness, are the best guide to his character. At half-past ten o'clock of that evening (30th of August) he telegraphed to Halleck as follows:

CAMP NEAR ALEXANDRIA, *August* 30, 1862—10.30 P. M.

I have sent to the front all my troops with the exception of Couch's division, and have given the orders necessary to insure its being disposed of as you directed. I hourly expect the return of one of my aides, who will give authentic news from the field of battle.

I can not express to you the pain and mortification I have experienced to-day in listening to the distant sound of the firing of my men. As I can be of no further use here, I respectfully ask that, if there is a probability of the conflict being renewed to-morrow, I may be permitted to go to the scene of battle with my staff, merely to be with my own men, if nothing more; they will fight none the worse for my being with them. If it is not deemed best to intrust me with the command even of my own army, I simply ask to be permitted to share their fate on the field of battle. Please reply to this to-night.

I have been engaged for the last few hours in doing what I can to make arrangements for the wounded. I have started out all the ambulances now landed. As I have sent my escort to the front, I would be glad to take some of Gregg's cavalry with me, if allowed to go.

G. B. McCLELLAN, *Major-General.*

To this earnest appeal to be permitted to share the fate of his own men, there came tardily on the next morning from Halleck the cold reply, "I can not answer without seeing the President, as General Pope is in command by his order of the department." Not one word of recognition of McClellan's patriotic and noble offer graced the dispatch of the General-in-Chief. On the next day, the 31st, Halleck sent the following dispatch, dated at 10.7 P. M.: "Since receiving your dispatch relating to command, I have not been able to answer

any not of absolute necessity. I have not seen the order as published, but will write to you in the morning. You will retain the command of everything in this vicinity not temporarily to be Pope's army in the field. I beg of you to assist me in this crisis with your ability and experience. I am entirely tired out."

The "order" referred to in this dispatch was one that emanated on the previous day from the War Department, by direction of Secretary Stanton, who now thought it well to utter a sneer at McClellan, while defining the commands of the different generals. The order read as follows:

WAR DEPARTMENT, *August* 30, 1862.

The following are the commanders of the armies operating in Virginia:

General Burnside commands his own corps, except those that have been temporarily detached and assigned to General Pope.

General McClellan commands that portion of the Army of the Potomac that has not been sent forward to General Pope's command.

General Pope commands the Army of Virginia, and all the forces temporarily attached to it.

All the forces are under the command of Major-General Halleck, General-in-Chief.

E. D. TOWNSEND,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

We have italicized the sting of this order, as most persons who read it at the time italicized it in their own minds. The whole country knew that everything had been taken from McClellan's late command and sent forward to Pope; but the public knew nothing of McClellan's earnest entreaty to be sent into the field in any capacity in which he could be of use. Mr. Stanton saw fit, therefore, to say to the people of the Union, "We have shelved McClellan, and, as he sits there in his tent at Alexandria with a body-guard of a hundred wounded men, you can look at him if you like." But, in a few short and disastrous hours, the eyes of all men were turned toward the General who could not be permitted to risk his life on the battle-field, in leading even a brigade or a regiment, because General Pope was in command.

On the morning of the 1st of September, McClellan, appealed to by Halleck for assistance, rode into Washington and went directly to Halleck's office. He told Halleck that Pope had been beaten. Halleck did not credit it. McClellan then told him that he ought to go out and see for himself. Halleck answered that he was too busy to go. "How can the General-in-Chief," said McClellan, "have more important business than to ascertain the condition of the army that is so near?" Finally, Hal-

leck said he would send his Assistant Adjutant-General, Colonel Kelton. McClellan advised Kelton to see the general officers and learn the exact state of things. On the same afternoon, McClellan, at the urgent request of Halleck, met the President at Halleck's house. The President expressed a fear that the Army of the Potomac was not cheerfully co-operating with and supporting General Pope; that he (Mr. Lincoln) "had always been a friend" of McClellan, and he now asked, as a special favor, that McClellan would use his influence in correcting this state of things. McClellan assured the President that his fears were groundless. Mr. Lincoln was much moved, and he again requested McClellan to telegraph to "Fitz John Porter or some other of his friends," and try to do away with any feeling that might exist, adding that no one but McClellan could rectify this evil. "I thereupon told him," says McClellan, "that I would cheerfully telegraph to General Porter, or do anything else in my power, to gratify his wishes and relieve his anxiety; upon which he thanked me very warmly, assured me that he could never forget my action in the matter, etc., and left.

"I then wrote the following telegram to General Porter, which was sent to him by the General-in-Chief":

WASHINGTON, *September* 1, 1862.

MAJOR-GENERAL PORTER; I ask of you for my sake, and that of the country, and the old Army of the Potomac, that you and all my friends will lend the fullest and most cordial co-operation to General Pope in all the operations now going on. The destinies of our country, the honor of our army, are at stake, and all depends now upon the cheerful co-operation of all in the field. This week is the crisis of our fate. Say the same thing to my friends in the Army of the Potomac, and that the last request I have to make of them is, that for their country's sake they will extend to General Pope the same support they ever have to me.

I am in charge of the defenses of Washington, and am doing all I can to render your retreat safe, should that become necessary.

GEORGE B. McCLELLAN.

PORTER'S REPLY.

FAIRFAX COURT-HOUSE, 10 A. M., *September* 2, 1862.

You may rest assured that all your friends, as well as every lover of his country, will ever give as they have given to General Pope their cordial co-operation and constant support, in the execution of all orders and plans. Our killed, wounded, and enfeebled troops attest our devoted duty.

F. J. PORTER.

It was, to use a familiar expression, very natural for the President to make this request, and equally

natural for McClellan to comply with it, unnecessary as he knew it to be. At such a time, a man like McClellan could not stop to consider what implication he might leave to be made by his enemies and the enemies of his lieutenants, by sending such a dispatch to his friends in the Army of the Potomac. Porter's noble reply was characteristic. He knew that McClellan could not have volunteered to ask him to do his duty. It was just as plain to him that McClellan had been asked to send this dispatch as if the words "at the request of the President" had been written at the top of it. When Porter penned his answer, he was surrounded by the proofs of what he and his officers and men had done; but, alas! these proofs were not at that moment visible at Washington, and, when the time for investigation came, the dark clouds of prejudice, passion, misconception, and misrepresentation shut out the truth. It was reserved to a better day and to discoveries almost providential, after long years of unmerited obloquy, to give to General Porter the most signal vindication that is recorded in the military annals of any nation.

After his interview with the President, in the afternoon of September 1st, General McClellan went to the house in Washington where his family then resided, and remained there that night. At half-past seven o'clock in the morning of the 2d, the

door-bell rang, and the President and General Halleck were ushered into the parlor. They said that Colonel Kelton had returned and reported a great disaster; that there were fifty thousand stragglers already on the roads leading into Washington, and that the city could not be saved. The President was deeply moved. He asked General McClellan if he was willing to take the command, *in that state of things.* McClellan expressed his willingness to take the command, and his belief that he could save the capital. Both Mr. Lincoln and General Halleck reiterated their fears that the enemy would enter the city. McClellan said he would stake his head on its safety. The President earnestly entreated him to take the command, and he assented without hesitation, without making a single condition or asking for a single promise of any kind. But what command did he then take? The whole arrangement was verbal only, made in a moment of extreme peril. Not a scrap of written order was made when the President left General McClellan's house.

Here, therefore, we must again pause to consider the unselfish devotion of the man to whom this appeal was made, and to note the peculiar magnanimity of his conduct. We will not ask our readers to praise him for forgetting the injuries and indignities that he had received from every

member of the Administration who had it in his power and was disposed to harm him. Patriotism can help even an ordinary man to separate his country from those who administer its affairs. But, when a general is placed in such a situation as that in which McClellan stood at that supreme moment, does not a rational and allowable regard for his own future demand that he make some provision for his own safety against the chances of war? "Will you," asked Mr. Lincoln, in his distress— "will you, dare you, take the command in such a dangerous crisis?" The question was a considerate one. It was meant to bring to McClellan's mind the risk that he would run, and it was a kind and thoughtful act to remind him of it. The peril was instantly assumed by McClellan, without a thought concerning himself. But why did he not ask for a written order? If he had no selfish conditions to make, no promises to exact, why did he not ask for a written order, defining the command which the President wished him to take? It could have been written in three minutes. The question which we have asked is very important, for two reasons; That he did not stipulate for a written order, shows how little he was considering his own safety. Again, as will appear hereafter, his want of written orders from that time forth exposed him to perils far beyond the loss of reputation that

would have followed his failure to save the capital from falling into the hands of the Confederates. Let him be blamed, if there are any who are disposed to blame him, for not exercising the average prudence of one who owes it to himself to be made as safe as, in a perilous enterprise, he can be. But let no generous and just person fail to see what he risked, or withhold from him the recognition of his extraordinary forgetfulness of himself when he had to confront a great danger for his country. That a written order defining McClellan's command could have been prepared on the spot, and that it must have been given if he had asked for it, can not be doubted. Both the President and the General-in-Chief knew that Pope had been beaten, very badly beaten, and that he could not be relied upon to save the capital. They knew that he was in full retreat, and that there was great disorder. Delicacy toward Pope, at such a moment, should not have restrained them from superseding him, or anybody else, by ordering McClellan to go to the front and assume the supreme command, if he had asked for such orders. Nor was there afterward any good reason, whether McClellan asked for them or not, for not giving him written orders defining his command and his duties, before he marched into Maryland, fought the battles of South Mountain and Antietam, and drove

Lee back into Virginia. But we must return to our narrative.

When the President and General Halleck left General McClellan's house on the morning of September 2d, the latter immediately sent for his staff and got on horseback. He at once visited various points in and around the city, and made provisional arrangements for receiving and disposing of the troops. It was his intention to go to the front and take the command of the retreating army. But in an hour or two a staff officer came to him from General Halleck with a message that he was not to go out and take the command, but that he was to wait the arrival of the troops just in front of the defenses of Washington. He then spent the morning in perfecting the arrangements for receiving the troops. The truth is, that many of the military and civil authorities in Washington at that moment believed the city to be in such peril that the President did not dare to permit McClellan to go beyond the immediate defenses of the capital. It was believed that the Government would have to fly, until McClellan's arrangements had, during that night, restored something like confidence to the officials and the inhabitants.

At about one o'clock on that day, McClellan rode out to Upton's Hill, three or four miles on the Virginia side of Washington. He arrived there

between two and three o'clock. At this spot he met the first brigade of the retreating forces, somewhat in advance of the main body. Generals Pope and McDowell rode in the middle of a regiment of cavalry. General McClellan said to General Pope that he would relieve him of the command, and asked for information of the roads on which the different corps were then retreating. Nothing very satisfactory was obtained. At that point heavy artillery-firing was heard in the distance. General Pope said that the attack was on Sumner's corps. General McClellan asked if it was a severe attack, and General Pope replied that he thought it was. McClellan then said that he should go forward to the scene of this cannonading. Generals Pope and McDowell asked if they could go into Washington, and, on being informed that they could, they rode on. McClellan went forward with one aide and three orderlies across the country in the direction of the firing, to reach the troops engaged. He struck the column on the Lewinsville road, about six miles from Upton's Hill. At this point the first body of troops of the regular service recognized him, and instantly raised a great shout, which went down the lines for miles back. The men who did not see him inferred from the shouts of their comrades that he was again in command. Those who were about him insisted on his leading them back

against the enemy. But no, it could not be; his orders restrained him. It was now evening, and darkness had settled down upon the landscape. McClellan pushed on toward Sumner's rear, and found that the firing had ceased; from which he concluded that Sumner's corps could reach in safety the position he had assigned for it. He then returned rapidly to Washington, and remained the greater part of the night near the chain-bridge, receiving reports and giving orders. During that night the troops as they came in were posted, and the next day, the 3d, was spent by McClellan in rectifying their positions. During that day the enemy disappeared from the front of Washington, and McClellan's information satisfied him that he intended to cross the upper Potomac into Maryland. "This," he says in his report, "materially changed the aspect of affairs, and enlarged the sphere of operations; for, in case of a crossing in force, an active campaign would be necessary to cover Baltimore, prevent the invasion of Pennsylvania, and clear Maryland." On the 3d McClellan reported to Halleck in person that he had sent forward the Second, Twelfth, and Ninth Corps to various positions on the roads north of Washington. Halleck asked who had been put in command of those corps. McClellan answered that he had designated no one to command them, but if there

should be any necessity for them to act, in consequence of the enemy suddenly crossing the river, he would command them himself. Halleck replied that it had not been determined who should command the troops sent out from Washington. McClellan therefore rejoined that he would not assign any one to command those troops, but would look out for them himself. At least on two or three other occasions, Halleck repeated what he had said about the command of troops sent out from Washington as a thing not determined.

It is now necessary to return to the previous day, the 2d of September, the day on which the President and General Halleck ordered General McClellan to take command and save the capital. At some time during that day the following order emanated from the War Department:

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
WASHINGTON, *September* 2, 1862.

Major-General McClellan will have command of the fortifications of Washington, and of all the troops for the defense of the capital.

(By order of Major-General HALLECK.)
E. D. TOWNSEND, *Assistant Adjutant-General.*

Construed by the existing state of things on that day, when it was expected that the fortifications of Washington would be immediately assailed by the

enemy, the meaning of this order was plain. Construed by the state of things on the following day, when the enemy was moving north with an evident purpose to cross into Maryland above Washington, what did this order mean? Where would *then* be the defense of Washington? Within its fortifications, or beyond them? What would be the "troops for the defense of the capital," with the command of which General McClellan had been invested? Strange to say, this was the only written order, defining McClellan's command, that ever proceeded from the War Department from that day until after McClellan had driven Lee across the Potomac. We have seen that General Halleck on the 3d did not consider the command of troops advancing beyond the immediate fortifications of Washington as settled; nor was it formally settled at any time thereafter until McClellan was displaced by Burnside. It was practically impossible for McClellan, while forwarding the troops, to busy himself with the settlement of the precise limits and scope of his command. He had consented, at the earnest entreaty of the President and General Halleck, to undertake for the safety of the capital.

The rapidly-shifting scenes of this extraordinary drama, enlarging every hour the sphere of defensive operations until they would have to pass into offensive movements, left no time for McClellan to

ask for more expanded orders. It was the duty of the Government to foresee and provide for the moment when he would have to go out of the fortified defenses of the city, and defend it and Baltimore and Pennsylvania by aggressive attacks on the advancing hosts of the Confederates. But for this they never provided, by written orders, defining McClellan's command. McClellan kept on for four days, making movements of the troops on the roads which led north from Washington. On the 7th, he ordered up his staff and escort and started for the head of the moving columns. But, before he rode out of Washington, he left his card as major-general for the President, the Secretary of State, and General Halleck. The President and General Halleck he saw. Halleck did not object to the movement of the troops. The President asked General McClellan if he had seen the Secretary of War, and begged him to do so as a personal favor. McClellan called upon Mr. Stanton, who received him with exuberant expressions of affection, said that he had always been McClellan's best friend, that bad men had made mischief between them, but that he should nevertheless always continue to support him cordially. Embracing the General with tenderness, Stanton bade him Godspeed. But the General had not been gone from the War Department five minutes, when the Secre-

tary spoke of him in terms of gross and shocking abuse.

Whether he trusted or distrusted the Secretary at that time, there was nothing for McClellan to do but to go forward and take the command. There was no one else who could take it—no one else who could handle that army. He could not stop to make conditions. He could think of but one thing—how to arrest the descent of Lee upon Washington, and to drive him back into Virginia. Shortly before the battle of South Mountain, which occurred on the 14th, General Lee was seated in his tent reading a dispatch that had been brought to him at that moment. General Longstreet, who was with him, asked for the news. "The worst possible news," said Lee; "McClellan is again in command."

We do not propose to describe battles, the details of which are familiar to all who have read of them. One thing, however, is not to be overlooked. During the first five days that followed McClellan's return to active duty, there had been no time to properly complete the re-equipment of the troops which came pouring into Washington after Pope's defeat. All military persons know that whatever may be the spirit of an army, after such fighting, such a defeat, and such a retreat, to put it again in active and aggressive movement,

with the proper material for long marches and encounters with the same foe, is a mighty work. The best that McClellan could do, before he marched out of Washington, was to restore in some degree the shattered organizations of the different corps, and to assign to them their lines of march. His movements northward had to be made carefully, so as not to uncover Washington before the enemy's position and plans were developed. But he was constantly impeded by General Halleck's cautions not to be too precipitate. On the 10th he learned from his scouts that Lee's army was probably in the vicinity of Frederick. On the 13th an order issued by General Lee on the 9th fell into McClellan's hands. It revealed the whole of Lee's plans. On the 14th the battle of South Mountain occurred, in which the Confederates were defeated, with a great loss in killed and wounded, and 1,500 prisoners were taken. The aggregate Federal loss was 1,568. On the following day, this dispatch came from the President to General McClellan:

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON,
September 15, 1862—2.45 P. M.

Your dispatch of to-day received. God bless you, and all with you. Destroy the rebel army, if possible.

A. LINCOLN.

To Major-General McCLELLAN.

General McClellan pressed forward his army in pursuit of the enemy, and on the 17th the long and desperately contested battle of Antietam, in which nearly the whole of the troops on both sides were actively engaged, ended in the defeat of the Confederates. On the night of the 18th the Confederate army recrossed the Potomac into Virginia, leaving 2,700 of their dead unburied on the field. Thirteen guns, thirty-nine colors, upward of fifteen thousand stand of small-arms, and more than six thousand prisoners, were captured by the Federals in the three battles of South Mountain, Crampton's Gap, and Antietam, without losing a single gun or a single color. The grand aggregate of the Federal killed, wounded, and missing, in the battle of Antietam, was 12,469. The total number of the Federal forces was 87,164 men. The enemy had about 10,000 more.

On the night after the battle of Antietam, McClellan anxiously deliberated whether he should pursue the enemy. If he had done so, and had lost the next battle, Lee could have marched as he pleased on Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, or New York. Nowhere east of the Alleghanies was there another organized force that could have arrested his march through an undevastated country, levying tribute as he went along from populous and wealthy cities. It would not do for Mc-

Clellan to risk another battle with less than absolute assurance of success. The elements of even a probable assurance of success were entirely wanting. The troops were overcome by the fatigue and exertion of the prolonged and severe battle of the 17th, and the day and night marches of the three previous days. The supply-trains were in the rear, and the troops had suffered from hunger. They required rest and refreshment. The means of transportation, if the troops had been immediately pushed across the Potomac, were inadequate to furnish a single day's supply of subsistence in advance. Ten general officers and many regimental and company officers, and a great number of the enlisted men, had been killed or disabled. Above all, it should not be forgotten that this army which had, under McClellan, thus fought and won these two sanguinary battles, was the same army that had come back to Washington disheartened by the defeat which it had suffered under General Pope, and that many of its organized bodies had left behind, lost, or worn out the greater part of their clothing and camp equipage, which required renewal before they could be in a suitable condition again to take the field. General McClellan, therefore, properly determined that the army should rest and be refitted.

But now there broke forth from all the organs

of the Administration the bitterest reproaches of McClellan and accusations of his slowness and inefficiency. Why did he not pursue Lee? Why did he not follow up the advantages he had gained? Hesitation, too much deliberation, a total want of "dash"—these were his supposed failings. The people of the North did not know, or did not heed, the fact, that McClellan held no orders but that one which had invested him with the command of the troops for the defense of Washington. It was only by acting on the military principle of offensive-defensive war that he could lead his army sixty or seventy miles from Washington in aggressive attacks upon Lee. When he had reached the Potomac and driven Lee beyond it, his order, upon the broadest construction, was exhausted. But, while a senseless clamor was incessantly dinned into the public ear, General McClellan was constantly occupied in reorganizing, drilling, and endeavoring to supply his army, and in watching and guarding all the passes of the river for a long distance. While this was going on, the President determined to make a visit to the army, and to learn for himself the real state of affairs. He arrived at General McClellan's headquarters on the 1st of October, and remained there three days. He rode over the field and made himself fully acquainted with the details of the battle. To several of General Mc-

Clellan's officers he expressed in the strongest terms his thanks for what had been done, spoke of McClellan with great praise, and said that his confidence in him was entire. On the last day of his visit he had a long conversation with McClellan himself. They sat together on a rock in the neighborhood of the General's tent, some of the staff standing near. The President said to McClellan that the only fault he had ever had to find with him was that he was too "slow"; that he had thought so heretofore, but that he now saw his mistake; that he was the only General in the service who could handle a large army; that he had his absolute and entire confidence; that he must go on and do what he thought right—move when he was ready, and not before—and, when he moved, do as he thought best; that he must make his mind easy, that he should not be removed from the command, and that he should have his (Mr. Lincoln's) full and unqualified support. The President had seen the destitute condition of the army, and promised that it should be remedied as quickly as practicable. He then went away.

It appears to us that the President, after his return to Washington, continued for a short time to be as firm in his support of McClellan as it was in his nature to be in regard to anything. But the bad influences soon began to work anew; and Mr.

Lincoln apparently did not fortify himself against those influences, by making known to the members of his Cabinet who were unfriendly to McClellan the pledges that he had given on the field of Antietam. On the 6th of October, about three days after Mr. Lincoln's return, General Halleck sent the following dispatch, which General McClellan received on the 7th :

WASHINGTON, D. C., *October* 6, 1862.

MAJOR-GENERAL MCCLELLAN: I am instructed to telegraph you as follows : The President directs that you cross the Potomac and give battle to the enemy, or drive him south. Your army must move now, while the roads are good. If you cross the river between the enemy and Washington, and cover the latter by your operations, you can be re-enforced with thirty thousand men. If you move up the valley of the Shenandoah, not more than twelve or fifteen thousand can be sent to you. The President advises the interior line between Washington and the enemy, but does not order it. He is very desirous that your army move as soon as possible. You will immediately report what line you adopt, and when you intend to cross the river. Also to what point the re-enforcements are to be sent. It is necessary that the plan of your operations be positively determined on before orders are given for building bridges and repairing railroads. I am directed to add that the Secretary of War and the General-in-Chief fully concur with the President in these instructions.

H. W. HALLECK, *General-in-Chief.*

This order was, of course, entirely inconsistent with what the President had said to McClellan only three or four days previously—that he was to move when he was ready and not before. But the order is to be explained by the "pressure" of which Mr. Lincoln often spoke, and which was constantly brought to bear upon him whenever and wherever McClellan was concerned. The last sentence of the dispatch shows the quarter from which the pressure came. The Secretary of War and the General-in-Chief had persuaded the President to speak in this order as if he did not intend to leave General McClellan to act on his own judgment as the President had voluntarily promised to do. The whole occurrence is a strong illustration of the folly of giving such orders to a general in the field who must know whether his army is in a condition to march into the enemy's country better than his government at home, unless he is entirely unfit for his place. If he is, he should be at once superseded. If he is not unfit for his position, his judgment should be followed, and everything should be done for him that is needful. As we proceed, we shall adduce not only the old but some entirely new and conclusive proof that General McClellan was right, and that the Secretary of War and the General-in-Chief were wrong.

At the time of the receipt of this dispatch of the

6th, notwithstanding the appearance of a peremptory direction to march which the Secretary and the General-in-Chief had infused into its words, it is apparent from the context that something was left to General McClellan's discretion as to the line of movement, and that the President could not be persuaded to make the order peremptory in this particular. Moreover, General McClellan had to construe this order by the solemn assurance that Mr. Lincoln had given him, only a few days before, that he should not be required to move on the enemy before he was ready. Whether he was to invade Virginia by either of the two lines indicated in the order, the fact of his being or not being in a condition to make an aggressive movement into the enemy's country remained exactly as it in truth was. The condition of his army was a most essential element in the problem, by whatever line he was to move. That condition had not changed in the three days that elapsed from the time when the President himself saw what it was; and, as we go on, we shall show that it had not so materially changed, for three weeks after the date of this order, that the army could have been safely marched upon a new and aggressive campaign in the enemy's country.

General McClellan fought the battles of South Mountain and Antietam without any written order

defining his command, excepting the ambiguous one of September 2d—ambiguous, that is to say, after the date on which it was issued from the War Department. What, then, would have been his fate if he had lost those battles, and especially the last? We must carry the reader back to a period when mean rivalries, deep hatreds, and vengeful prejudices had their sway. It can not be doubted that, if McClellan had been defeated in the battle of Antietam, he would have had to answer for it before a court-martial, and that his blood would have been demanded. We know what deeds were done in that period under the forms and mockeries of military justice. McClellan's bitterest enemies were among those who, from their official stations, would have had the power, which they would not have scrupled to use, to arraign him for having assumed a command to which he had not been legally assigned. They could have pointed to the narrow scope of the order of September 2d, and they would have pointed to the lives of brave men that had been lost and the public property that had been destroyed beyond what, they would have contended, was the scope of the only authority that he had received which could avail him as a legal order. In suffering McClellan to be thus exposed, President Lincoln would seem to have been unconscious of what a strain might be brought upon his own

sense of executive justice if any disaster should befall the General who had taken the command at his earnest personal entreaty, and who had been left without a proper legal authority for the acts which he was expected to perform. Beyond all doubt it would have cost Mr. Lincoln the deepest pain if any misfortune had exposed one hair of McClellan's head to any danger. At the base of Mr. Lincoln's statue which stands in the heart of this metropolis, and is passed every day by half a million of people, there is inscribed a legend which imputes to him that he had "charity for all, malice toward none." We may believe that the ascription is just. But what would Mr. Lincoln's amiable qualities have availed against the hatreds, the machinations, and the devices of McClellan's enemies if he had not been victorious in the battles which he fought without other than an implied authority for fighting them? When McClellan overtook and gave battle to the enemy on the field of Antietam, he may without exaggeration be said to have twice taken his life in his hand.*

* General McClellan was under fire during the battle of Antietam several times, and on each occasion for a considerable period, and with great exposure. His duties required him to expose himself both to artillery and infantry fire, at many critical periods of the day. At one time, he rode along the lines for the very purpose of drawing the fire of a supposed concealed battery, in order to reveal its position. It opened upon him and his staff as soon as they were within range.

PART II.

THE battle of Antietam had been fought and won, on the 17th of September, 1862. General Lee had retreated across the Potomac on the night of the 18th. General McClellan, for reasons which we have detailed in our former paper, had determined that in the condition of his army after the battle an immediate advance into the enemy's country was impracticable; and, moreover, he had reached the utmost limit from which, according to the only order that he then held, he could be justified in offensive movements. He had fought the battle of Antietam for the defense of Washington; in command of "the troops for the defense of the capital," as the order of September 2d was framed; and even by this construction of his authority he had taken upon himself a vast responsibility. The President, on the 1st of October, had visited the scene of the battle, learned the exhausted and destitute condition of the army, told General McClellan that he should not be ordered to move until he

was ready, and voluntarily promised that he should be continued in command.

There now arose a very extraordinary condition of things. A general was in the field, at the head of an army of nearly one hundred thousand men, awaiting orders. But that army needed indispensable supplies, before it could be put in motion in pursuit of the enemy, and many of its departments required reorganization. It had, too, to perform the duty of guarding the passes of a long reach of the Potomac against a new invasion of Maryland and a sudden descent upon Washington. The higher officials at the seat of Government, who had the control of military affairs, began at an early period after the battle of Antietam to call in question the truth of General McClellan's representations, that he was not receiving the supplies which he needed to enable him to execute an order to advance into the enemy's country, where he could not anticipate that his march would not be opposed. Under all ordinary circumstances, a government would unhesitatingly accept the representations of a general in the field, situated as McClellan then was, respecting the condition of his army and the possibility of an advance. Of all the military men who were in high commands during any part of our late war, McClellan was peculiarly fitted to know at all times the condition of his

troops. His accomplishments as an organizer were very remarkable; his habits of attention to the wants of his troops were unceasing; and he never relaxed his vigilant oversight of details of a minute character. Nor were his ability and judgment as a strategist inferior to his powers as an organizer. All this was well known to the authorities in Washington. Without the existence, therefore, of some very extraordinary reason, furnishing a motive, good or bad, for not trusting General McClellan as Mr. Lincoln had voluntarily promised on the field of Antietam to trust him, it is very difficult to account for the fact that an issue was gotten up in the counsels at Washington respecting the truth of General McClellan's representations of the condition of his army.

From the 11th to the 28th of October, General McClellan constantly complained in his dispatches that his requisitions for supplies had not been met, so as to render it practicable for him to advance into the enemy's country upon an aggressive campaign. It is well known that there has been an assertion, transmitted from that day to this, that everything which he had asked for had been forwarded; and it has been charged that it was in consequence of a constitutional indecision and want of vigor that he did not cross the Potomac in pursuit of Lee at least as early as the 10th of

October. Perhaps one half of the nation to-day believe this to be true, because it was officially asserted. It is certainly untrue. The question is a question of fact, to be judged upon evidence; and to be judged upon principles of belief such as we apply to any disputed matter of history. In that manner we shall examine this assertion.

We have presented to our readers, from President Lincoln's own lips, indubitable proof that the army was in no condition to move on the 1st of October. We shall now descend into details, and shall show that General McClellan was right in saying, as he did in his report, that, down to the 28th of October, his army still lacked the very supplies which were essential to any general movement of its corps. The imperative wants of the army, after the battle of Antietam, were very numerous. Persons who are not professionally acquainted with such matters can not easily conceive of the kinds and quantities of things with which an army in active operations must be constantly supplied. We conceive of the soldier as a man whose wants have been systematically reduced to the minimum that is consistent with his efficiency. He stands before our imaginations well and appropriately clad, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, and with his musket, his knapsack, his ammunition-belt, and his canteen. All superfluities

are discarded, and he bears on his person nothing that is not absolutely needful to his vocation, and everything that is needful in the best possible condition. But the vast *matériel* with which the field depots of an army must be constantly filled, in order to keep this human machine, the soldier, in marching or fighting condition, and provide for him when he is wounded or sick, we can bring before us only by an effort of the mind, applied to practical details. We must think of the supply-trains and the thousands of draught-animals required to serve them, and to serve the artillery, and of the horses of a higher class to remount the cavalry. We must think of clothing, and food, and forage; of hospital stores, of shelter-tents, of ammunition, of tools for intrenching purposes, of mechanical implements for all the manifold uses of a great multitude of men who can safely depend for nothing that is wanted upon the country around them. We must remember, too, that nothing is so destructive as war; that in a single battle a well-equipped army, even if victorious, may be reduced to a state bordering on destitution; and that a long and hurried march of troops may strip them of indispensable supplies if they get beyond the base from which their supplies are to come. Recollecting these things, we may be prepared to examine the wants of General McClellan's army after the

battle of Antietam, not forgetting the important fact that it had been taken up by him after the defeat at the second Bull Run, in a condition of great derangement, and had been employed in marching or fighting from the 3d to the 17th of September, in which two weeks Maryland had been freed from the presence of the enemy and Washington had been saved.

The principal wants of this army, after the battle of Antietam, consisted of horses and forage, ammunition and food, and shoes and clothing for the men. Whenever an order might come to General McClellan enlarging the sphere of his operations and bidding him advance across the Potomac, he could be in no condition to obey it unless these indispensable wants of his army had been supplied. Horses, forage, ammunition, and food came forward slowly; but without shoes and clothing no army could be moved, and the deficiencies of this army in shoes and clothing continued to be enormous down to a very late period after the order of October 6th to cross the Potomac and give battle to the enemy or drive him south was received. The reports of the army quartermasters, made to General McClellan's headquarters between the 15th and the 25th of October, leave no possible room for doubt that between those dates large bodies of the army were so destitute of shoes, clothing, and other

indispensable supplies, that a general movement was impossible before it commenced. The chief quartermaster, Colonel Ingalls, reported on the 10th, four days after the date of the President's order to advance, "The suffering and impatience are excessive"; and unless we suppose that he and the corps commanders, and the division and regimental quartermasters, were all engaged in a common conspiracy with General McClellan to misrepresent the condition of the troops, we must accept their statements as true. Some of the corps commanders sent their wagon-trains repeatedly on long journeys to the depots where the supplies should have been, and the wagons came back empty. Even on the 30th, after the movement across the Potomac began, some of the corps had not received their supplies, and did not receive them until they were crossing the river. Of course, it is entirely immaterial what may have appeared on the books or records of the Quartermaster-General's office in Washington in regard to the supplies *ordered* for the Army of the Potomac. The sole question is, When were they *delivered* at the depots of the army in Maryland, sixty or seventy miles from Washington? No one must lose sight of and no one must be permitted to obscure the issue: and it must not be forgotten that it was the duty of the authorities in Washington not only to order the

supplies, but to cause them to be placed where they were wanted.

General McClellan's report contains a tabular statement of clothing and equipage received at the different depots of the Army of the Potomac, from the 1st of September to the 31st of October. It will be remembered that the battles of South Mountain and Antietam had been fought before the 1st of October. In whatever condition the army may have left Washington between the 3d and the 7th of September, the supplies received before or during those battles could not have made up the deficiencies caused by the marching and fighting of the two weeks prior to the 18th of September, the day on which Lee's army was withdrawn into Virginia. The tabular statement above referred to shows that by far the greater bulk of most of the enumerated articles reached the depots of the army between the 15th and the 25th of October. But, from the 25th to the 31st there came in, of the single article "boots," 20,040, being 6,240 more than were received prior to the 25th. Of "bootees," there were received 52,900, between October 15th and 25th, being 43,900 more than were received before the 15th. Of "stockings," there came in, between the 15th and the 25th, 65,200; and between the 25th and the 31st, 30,000; being 95,200 received since October 15th, and

amounting to 66,975 more than had been received prior to the 15th. A comparison of the other articles enumerated, "forage-caps," "cavalry-jackets," "canteens," "flannel shirts," "haversacks," "trousers," "coats," "shelter-tents," "camp-kettles," "mess-pans," "overcoats," "artillery-jackets," "blankets," "felt hats," "knit shirts and drawers," shows like results. There were, for example, 70,000 drawers received between the 15th and the 31st, being 42,300 more than all the supplies of this article that reached the army from the 1st of September to the 15th of October. On these facts, if we know how to deal with facts, we think our readers will concur with us in believing that Colonel Ingalls might well say on the 10th of October that the suffering and impatience were excessive; for let it be observed that these indispensable supplies, which came in so slowly, after the President's order of the 6th of October had directed a march, came, when they did come, to fill earnest and pressing requisitions upon the authorities in Washington, made continuously from the 11th to the 28th.

But we have not yet done with this branch of our subject. During the period of General McClellan's reiterated complaints that he was not receiving supplies indispensable to an advance into Virginia, the President, supposing that something

was wrong, caused a step to be taken by a gentleman in whom he had entire confidence, and who was in every way qualified to ascertain the exact state of General McClellan's army. This was Colonel Thomas A. Scott, of Pennsylvania, who had been Assistant Secretary of War at a former period. From him we have obtained, through a common friend, the information given in a letter, dated at Philadelphia on the 19th of February of the present year [1880], from which we are permitted to take the following extracts:

I had been actively engaged, about the time of Lee's [threatened] invasion of Pennsylvania, in looking after the defenses of our own border, especially in connection with the safety of our own lines of road. In the performance of this duty, I was necessarily called to Washington a number of times, and, while there, about the middle of October, 1862, I had a conversation with Mr. Stanton, Secretary of War, and President Lincoln, in regard to the delay in the movement of General McClellan's army, and its reported condition of inefficiency to effect a movement without proper and greatly needed supplies. At the request of the President and Secretary of War I went to General McClellan's headquarters, near Harper's Ferry, and stated to him the object of my visit. General McClellan then said that it was not a matter that required discussion, but that he would have Major Myers, chief quartermaster of his staff, or rather of the Army of the

Potomac,* show me the requisitions that had been made for supplies, and also a statement of the amount received, and that I could draw my own inferences from these data as to whether his army had been properly supplied or was in a condition to move. He stated that he was not only short of shoes, clothing, and other necessaries for the men, but he had not the horses to move his cavalry and artillery, and, notwithstanding he had requested it, he had not been authorized to procure his horses from the country where his army lay, although he felt sure that he could do so more promptly and more cheaply than the horses could be furnished from Washington.

I said to General McClellan that both the President and the Secretary of War were under the impression that all supplies for which he had made requisitions had been furnished him, and that they could not understand why that should be given as a reason for his failing to move.

On learning the facts I have stated, I immediately returned to Washington, saw Mr. Stanton, General Halleck, and the President, and told them the exact state of the case. Both Mr. Stanton and General Halleck then repeated their assurance that all General McClellan's requisitions had been met; and it was then suggested that, as the troops in the forts around Washington constituted a part of the Army of the Potomac, the supplies that were intended for General McClellan's army in the field, instead of having been sent to him at Harper's Ferry, had by some means or other been diverted for the use of the

* Major Myers was the assistant quartermaster with Colonel Ingalls.

troops in the fortifications, and thus had failed to reach him. This proved to be the explanation of the trouble, and, in conference with the President, he requested the Secretary of War to see that the supplies needed were forwarded at once to General McClellan's army at Harper's Ferry, and also that General McClellan was given the necessary authority to make requisitions upon the country for the horses needed for his army movement. Both of those things were, of course, done instantly, and the result was that General McClellan moved his army—I think in less than a fortnight after the supplies had been forwarded.

It is apparent, from the internal evidence of the dispatches, that Colonel Scott's visit to the army and his report to the President must have occurred at some time between the 20th and the 28th of October. After the 20th there was an evident change of tone in the dispatches which General Halleck sent to General McClellan by order of the President. Thus, on the 21st Halleck telegraphed to McClellan: "Your telegram of 12 M. has been submitted to the President. He directs me to say that he has no change to make in his order of the 6th instant. If you have not been, and are not now, in a condition to obey it, you will be able to show such want of ability. The President does not expect impossibilities; but he is very anxious that all this good weather should not be lost. Tele-

graph when you will move, and on what lines you propose to march." Now, although General Halleck in an official letter, which he wrote to the Secretary of War on the 28th, still said that in his opinion there had been no such want of supplies as to prevent General McClellan's compliance with the orders to advance against the enemy, yet it is apparent that the President knew on the 21st that there must be reason to doubt the correctness of this opinion, and that he would not then permit McClellan to think that impossibilities were required of him. We therefore date the return of Colonel Scott from the army and his report to the President at some time after the 21st of October; and, from the fact that sufficient supplies had not been received on the 28th, and that on the 1st of November the last body of the army crossed the Potomac, we conclude that the supplies which Colonel Scott caused to be forwarded from Washington were dispatched on the 28th, 29th, or 30th of October.

The figures which we have given above, taken in connection with Colonel Scott's statements, show that between the 6th and the 25th of October the forts around Washington must have been gorged with supplies, while General McClellan's army in the field was left destitute. Was this a blunder of "red tape," or was it intentional? Who

caused it, or who was responsible for it? Things are sometimes allowed to occur without leaving any trace by which the just responsibility for them can afterward be fixed. Whether it was by accident or design that General McClellan's requisitions were not filled until after the discovery was made by Colonel Scott of the real state of affairs, the detention of McClellan's army on the Maryland side of the Potomac until after the 28th of October is accounted for.*

* While these pages are passing through the press, we have received the results of a research which has been kindly made for us by the officials of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, at their depot in Washington. These results establish the following facts: 1. During the month of October, 1862, the shipments of supplies for General McClellan's army, made from Washington, consisted chiefly of regimental baggage, medical stores, ammunition, harness, hardware, and iron. Some clothing was sent, but not in proportion to other articles. 2. On the 28th, 30th, and 31st of October, no shipments of clothing were made from Washington; but on the 29th there were seven packages and two boxes for the Fifth Regiment of New York Volunteers, and one hundred and fifty-two boxes consigned to Captain Alexander Bliss, at Harper's Ferry, accompanied by a special agent. This was the supply of clothing spoken of by Colonel Ingalls, the Chief Quartermaster, which was intended for Sumner's corps, and which Colonel Ingalls in his report said came almost too late for issue, as the army was then crossing into Virginia. (See McClellan's Report, p. 424.) 3. Everything intended for General McClellan's army was dispatched from the Washington depot as soon as it was received there and could be loaded. The large quantities of clothing, shoes, and other supplies, embraced in the tabular statement given in General McClellan's report, and which were received at the army depots from the 25th to the 31st of October, were sent from Philadelphia, or Harrisburg, to Hagerstown; and a comparison of the dispatches sent by Colonel Ingalls to Harrisburg and his report leave no room to

But we must for a moment retrace our steps, and must again remind the reader that, from the 2d of September until the 6th of October, McClellan had no orders under which he could act otherwise than on the defensive. It has always seemed to us of the highest importance to ascertain, if possible, what were the counsels of Stanton and Halleck, and their compeers, which preserved intact that inexplicable and unparalleled state of things—McClellan and his great army without definite orders until the 6th of October. "General McClellan will have command of the fortifications of Washington and of all the troops for the defense of the capital," remained his sole order from the 2d of September to the 6th of October. Mr. Lincoln knew that McClellan had no orders except to act on the defensive, and that he could not advance except at his peril. How was it, and by whom was it, that Mr. Lincoln was made to keep things in this condition for the space of five weeks? We can conceive of but one rational explanation of his conduct, which will relieve it from a criticism that we do not wish to make. He may have considered, down to the battle of Antietam, as McClellan did, that the order

doubt that the effect of Colonel Scott's visit to the army and his report to the President was that, in the last days of October, there was the same (although late) activity in sending supplies to Hagerstown from Pennsylvania that was produced in sending supplies to Harper's Ferry from Washington.

of September 2d, to act on the defensive, ended at the Potomac when McClellan had driven Lee across that river. If so, the period between the date of the battle of Antietam, September 17th, and the 6th of October was a period when McClellan was both waiting for orders to advance and waiting for indispensable supplies. The order came to McClellan on the 7th of October, and the supplies that were absolutely necessary to enable him to execute it came at the end of three weeks afterward.*

We have now to describe briefly the plans which General McClellan had in view, after he crossed the Potomac, for dividing the forces of the enemy so that he could attack and beat them in detail. Six days sufficed for the march of fifty miles from the Potomac to Warrenton, after the last corps of the army had crossed; notwithstanding that heavy rains delayed the movement considerably in the beginning, and three of the corps had to wait at least one day at the crossings to complete their necessary supplies. At the end of the six days, General McClellan had made the different dispositions of his troops which his plans for ad-

* The cruel suffering inflicted upon the soldiers by this failure to supply them with necessaries could be described by living witnesses in terms that we can not command. It is a fact that many men, in a corps led by a gallant officer who has depicted to us their condition, marched from the Potomac to Warrenton with bare and bleeding feet, and could not be shod until they reached that place.

vancing against the enemy contemplated. His headquarters were at Rectortown on the 6th of November. The main body of his infantry had then reached Warrenton, and his advanced cavalry lay some miles south of that place, toward Culpepper Court-House. Although, in the order of October 6th, the President had advised an interior line of movement so as to place the army between Washington and the enemy, yet he did not peremptorily direct it, and on the 26th of October General Halleck had telegraphed to General McClellan as follows: "Since you left Washington, I have advised and suggested in relation to your movements, but I have given you no orders. I do not give you any now. The Government has intrusted you with defeating and driving back the rebel army in your front. I shall not attempt to control you in the measures you may adopt for that purpose; you are informed of my views, but the President has left you at liberty to adopt them or not as you may deem best." Two observations may be made here: First, that General McClellan was to make his own plans for the campaign and to be responsible for them; second, that it was General McClellan who had been intrusted with the duty of defeating or driving back the enemy. Yet General Halleck was then preparing in Washington the evidence which was to be used to furnish

the ostensible reason for removing General McClellan from the command, before he could encounter the enemy by the plans which he had been left at liberty to adopt. Our readers will observe, as we proceed, that it could not have been on account of his intended strategy that General McClellan was to be removed; but that the evidence, which was to furnish a plausible ground for his removal, related wholly to the unnecessary delay on the field of Antietam which General Halleck and others in Washington falsely imputed to him.

The plan of campaign which General McClellan had adopted before he reached Rectortown can be best described in his own words:

> The plan of campaign I adopted during the advance was to move the army well in hand parallel to the Blue Ridge, taking Warrenton as the point of direction for the main body, seizing each pass in the Blue Ridge by detachments as we approached it, and guarding them after we had passed, as long as they would enable the enemy to trouble our communications with the Potomac. It was expected that we would unite with the Eleventh Corps and Sickles's division near Thoroughfare Gap. We depended upon Harper's Ferry and Berlin for supplies, until the Manassas Gap Railway was reached; when that occurred, the passes in our rear were to be abandoned, and the army massed ready for action or movement in any direction.

It was my intention, if, upon reaching Ashby's or any other pass, I found that the enemy were in force between it and the Potomac, in the valley of the Shenandoah, to move into the valley and endeavor to gain their rear. I hardly hoped to accomplish this, but did expect that, by striking in between Culpepper Court-House and Little Washington, I could either separate their army and beat them in detail, or else force them to concentrate as far back as Gordonsville, and thus place the Army of the Potomac in position either to adopt the Fredericksburg line of advance upon Richmond, or to be removed to the Peninsula, if, as I apprehended, it were found impossible to supply it by the Orange and Alexandria Railroad beyond Culpepper.

He then gives in detail the positions in which he had placed the different corps of his army, in accordance with this plan, down to the 6th of November, adding: "Had I remained in command, I should have made the attempt to divide the enemy, as before suggested; and, could he have been brought to battle within reach of my supplies, I can not doubt that the result would have been a brilliant victory for our army."

At this time, the distance between the advanced pickets of General McClellan's cavalry and Longstreet's position at Culpepper Court-House was hardly six miles; and, from the compact mass of Federal troops collected around Warrenton to

Longstreet's position, the distance was not quite eighteen miles. At the same time General Lee, with the other half of his army, was about thirty miles to the northwest from McClellan's advanced position, and somewhat more than that from Longstreet. General McClellan might, therefore, have well anticipated that he would be able to separate the two wings of the Confederate army, beating Longstreet separately, or forcing him at least to fall back upon Gordonsville. In that event, to transfer the Federal army to Richmond would have been only a question respecting its base of supply. If it could not have been supplied directly from Washington, beyond Culpepper Court-House, it could have been thrown upon the Peninsula and have found its old base on the James, with all the advantages of water transportation. The accompanying map shows the positions of the Federal and the Confederate troops on the 7th and 8th of November.

At a late hour on the night of November 7th, a special messenger from the War Department reached General McClellan's tent at Rectortown, bearing the following order:

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
WASHINGTON, D. C., *November* 5, 1862.

GENERAL: On the receipt of the order of the President sent herewith, you will immediately turn over your command to Major-General Burnside, and repair to Tren-

ton, New Jersey; reporting on your arrival at that place for further orders.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. W. HALLECK, *General-in-Chief.*

Major-General McCLELLAN.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
WASHINGTON, *November* 5, 1862.

GENERAL ORDERS No. 182.

By direction of the President of the United States, it is ordered that Major-General McClellan be relieved from the command of the Army of the Potomac, and that Major-General Burnside take the command of that army.

By order of the Secretary of War:

E. D. TOWNSEND, *Adjutant-General.*

General Burnside arrived at General McClellan's tent with the messenger who brought the order. Having read the order, McClellan handed it to his successor, saying quietly, "Well, Burnside, you are to command the army." At an early hour on the next morning, McClellan, accompanied by his staff, rode toward Warrenton. The order changing the command had not then been promulgated to the army. As McClellan passed the columns on the road to Warrenton, the men greeted him as usual with their enthusiastic cheers, but they looked inquiringly and anxiously into his face, for they

had somehow, they knew not why, begun to fear that something extraordinary was about to happen. This foreboding, half-bewildered study of his countenance met him at every step. If the troops had known what he knew, what would have been their feelings, their demonstrations, their fears! He rode on, giving no sign of what was in his thoughts, but making his customary acknowledgments of the affectionate greetings of the men. After he reached Warrenton, a day was spent in viewing the positions of the troops and in conferences with General Burnside respecting future operations. In the course of that day the order was published, and General McClellan issued a farewell address to the army. On the evening of Sunday, the 9th, there was an assembly of officers who came to take leave of him. On the 10th he visited some of the various camps, and, amid the impassioned cries and demonstrations of the men, he took a last look of the troops who had followed him with such unfaltering devotion. 'History," he said to the officers who crowded around him—" history will do justice to the Army of the Potomac, even if the present generation does not. I feel as if I had been intimately connected with each and all of you. Nothing is more binding than the friendship of companions in arms. May you all in future preserve the high reputation of our army, and serve all as

well and faithfully as you have served me!" On the 11th, at Warrenton Junction, he entered with his staff a railroad train that was about to start toward Washington. Here there was stationed a detachment of two thousand troops. They were drawn up in line, and a salute was fired. The men then broke their ranks, surrounded the car in which he was seated, uncoupled it from the train and ran it back, insisting wildly that he should not leave them, and uttering the bitterest imprecations against those who had deprived them of their beloved commander. The scene has been described to us by an officer who was present as one of fearful excitement. The moment was critical. One word, one look of encouragement, the lifting of a finger, would have been the signal for a revolt against lawful authority, the consequences of which no man can measure. McClellan stepped upon the front platform of the car, and there was instant silence. His address was short. It ended in the memorable words, "Stand by General Burnside as you have stood by me, and all will be well." The soldiers were calmed. They rolled the car onward, recoupled it to the train, and with one long and mournful huzza bade farewell to their late commander, whom many of them were destined never to behold again. General McClellan reached Washington on the following day, and without tarrying

for an hour proceeded at once to Trenton, where he arrived at four o'clock in the morning of the 12th. From that time he never again saw Lincoln, or Stanton, or Halleck.

It is not inappropriate to consider here what was squandered by the Administration when they took McClellan from the service of the country. Aside from all his other powers, in which his usefulness as a general far exceeded those of any other man who was then on this side of the Alleghany range, there can be no question that he possessed the rare power of inspiring his troops with confidence in his abilities and attachment to his person, to a very uncommon degree. What was the secret of his power over men? Why was it that they loved him and fought under him so bravely, so steadily, oftentimes against odds that would have made an army quail under another leader? During the seven days of the perilous march to the James, there was terrible fighting; but the Army of the Potomac saved its honor, although attacked, through a whole week, by a far larger force, led by some of the ablest generals in the Confederate service. If McClellan, when he ordered that flank movement, had been suddenly superseded by any other general who can be named, that army would have been annihilated. When the combined forces under Pope were driven back upon Washington in

a disorderly rout, why was it that, the instant McClellan's restoration to command became known, the old enthusiasm, discipline, and order were restored, as if by magic? Why did the officers and the troops fight at Antietam as we know they did fight—no important movement in the battle, save one, failing to be executed when the order for it was first given?* What, we again ask,

[* The order here alluded to was an order given by General McClellan personally to General Burnside, on the night before the battle of Antietam, to lead his command across a certain bridge at daylight on the next morning, and to operate at once against the enemy on the other side of the stream. How many times this order was repeated, after General McClellan learned during the battle that General Burnside had not moved, and what were the consequences of the order not being obeyed when it should have been, can be accurately known only when the surviving officers who are cognizant of the facts have been heard from, and when other persons who received the facts orally from General McClellan have repeated them. The Congressional "Committee on the Conduct of the War" examined both General McClellan and General Burnside in February and March, 1863, but the Committee took very good care not to draw out from either of those generals the important facts respecting the time when General Burnside first received this order from General McClellan. General McClellan volunteered no testimony on the subject of this order. General Burnside did not state when he *first* received the order to carry the bridge; but the inference from what he did state is that at ten o'clock on the day of the battle he was *awaiting an order* from General McClellan to make the attack on the bridge, and he stated that "the bridge was carried about half-past one o'clock"; that he received the order to make the attack on the bridge at "about ten o'clock." It is within the knowledge of persons now living that the carrying of that bridge was a very important part of the plan of the battle which General McClellan settled on the previous night; that he gave the order personally to General Burnside on that night; that the order was to make the attack at daybreak on the following morning; that the order was

was the secret of McClellan's power over an army?

It is worth while to analyze such a power if we can, because, when it exists, it constitutes, for a government that is at war, one of its dearest possessions. It is a public property, as valuable as any other resources for successful warfare, and therefore requiring the most careful and conscientious husbandry. A government that throws away such a moral power might as well cripple itself by destroying one half of its physical means. It has often been said that an army is a machine, and that the more nearly it approaches to the condition of a physical machine, which is absolutely under the control of an operator, the better army it is. But this idea of an army, at least in modern times and

not executed then; that it was repeated several times; and that the officer who carried it the last time (about noon) was directed to supersede General Burnside on the spot, and lead the column himself, if General Burnside did not instantly move. General McClellan was summoned before and examined by the "Committee on the Conduct of the War" long after the Administration had displaced him in the command of the Army of the Potomac and made General Burnside his successor, and after all the events had occurred in which General McClellan had any personal share. His reticence respecting this order at the battle of Antietam was in accordance with his habitual delicacy toward other officers. The members of the Committee, however, if they meant to elicit the truth, and to ascertain why the Confederate forces were not entirely crushed in that battle, were under no such restraint. But they were under the influence of personal and political hostility to General McClellan, which made them both willing and eager to throw all blame upon him, and to shield every one else at his expense.]

in wars in which a great public principle is at stake, requires a good deal of modification. An army is a machine, but it is a moral and conscious machine, as well as a physical one. It has feelings, passions, intelligence, quick perceptions, and a capacity to understand what is required of it. That impalpable essence which is called the *esprit de corps* of an army, what is it but the aggregate feeling of a great body of men, into which are fused for a time the moral existences of the individuals that compose the mass? Take two soldiers from the ranks, and compare their differences in courage, physical strength, power of endurance, intelligence, and spirit of obedience, and the differences will often be found to be very great. But there is a resultant of these qualities, when the average is formed by the union of a great mass of individual characters in one organization, and that resultant of moral and physical forces is the complex machine with which a commander has to deal.

In studying the careers of distinguished generals who have possessed something more of power over their armies than the mere authority of their stations gave them, it will be found that the individual character of the man has had a great deal to do with his influence over his troops. There have been commanders in whom the passion for personal glory has been the strongest force in their

natures; and when the national character has been one that feels national glory to be the greatest of all objects, and that character has pervaded the armies, deeds almost superhuman have been done. When Napoleon I fulminated his bombastic addresses to his troops, he touched a chord of the national honor in their breasts, a feeling for the honor of France, while he at the same time aroused in them a passionate sympathy with his own glory. When we turn to commanders of an entirely different moral character, we must still look to their personal qualities for the secret of whatever extraordinary influence they may have exercised over their troops, and must also take into consideration the national character and the nature of the war. In our late civil war there was a principle at stake on both sides, which the masses of the armies on both sides well understood, from the first. Perhaps there were greater numbers of soldiers of foreign birth in the Federal than there were in the Confederate armies, but this foreign element did not prevent the national character and the national feeling from predominating over and pervading the whole. As a general thing, the soldiers of foreign birth in the Federal service understood and believed in the importance of the principle at stake as well as the native Americans; and, when the Federal conscription took place, it was the popular

conviction of the necessity for re-establishing the Union under one government that caused a general submission of all classes to a measure that was unquestionably beyond the limits of constitutional authority.

General McClellan himself was a most conspicuous embodiment of the national feeling for the Union, which existed throughout the States that adhered to the Federal Government, as he was of the general conviction that the welfare of the whole country required that State secession be suppressed. He had and he used a great power to impart this feeling and conviction to his troops. Officers and men who fought under him knew what they were fighting for, and they knew it all the better and felt it all the more intensely because of the example given to them by a commander whom they respected for his virtues, and loved for his conscientious care of their lives. They knew that he had a great heart as well as a wise head. They knew that in executing his orders they were obeying a mind equal to any emergency that they had to encounter; and that for those who would have to meet death, or wounds, or disease, there would be that tender pity which is the soldier's greatest consolation, and that this softer quality of human nature was in McClellan blended with the most robust manliness. Such was the feeling toward

him, alike among officers and men; but the former regarded him with a larger recognition. They saw in him a representation of the best attributes of our national character—of its cultivation, its instructed energy, its moral and religious principle, its capacity to encounter difficulties, its devotion to duty, its disdain of unworthy arts, its superiority to vulgar ambitions, its power of self-control when injuries, and injustice, and obloquy, are heaped upon faithful and true-hearted service. To this we must add the effect, upon all classes, of what it is difficult to describe, but it is something that all can understand. It goes by the name of personal magnetism. It is that charm of the personal presence, which is compounded of what beams from the countenance and is expressed in the manners, and what is intuitively felt to be the nature of the man. It is a mysterious influence, but a very powerful one. There have been highly distinguished military men who have not had a particle of this power, and whom one never cares to see a second time. But, when this power is possessed, it is a great treasure. The dying boy, on the field of Antietam, who raised himself on his elbow as his general rode by in the heat of the battle, shouted out the familiar name with the most affectionate endearments, and then dropped dead upon the turf, might have told the great men at Washington what they would lose if

they should take this commander from the head of that army.

We shall close our discussion of this subject in the next number of the Review, with a consideration of the political reason which is supposed to have operated upon President Lincoln, and to have caused him to remove General McClellan from the command of the Army of the Potomac. We have shown that the alleged unnecessary delay after the battle of Antietam could not have been publicly assigned by the President as a reason for this act. The delay was known to the President, nearly two weeks before the date of the order changing the command, to have been occasioned solely by the want of indispensable supplies. It remains for us, therefore, to examine the political reason which has been suggested as the explanation of the President's course. This will bring us to the character and purpose of the Harrison's Landing letter, which General McClellan wrote to Mr. Lincoln just four months before he was ordered to turn over the command to General Burnside and to report at Trenton.

PART III.

THERE remains for us but one subject for discussion in connection with the historical events over which we have passed in the preceding papers. This relates to one of those popular errors which sometimes become so fixed as matters of belief that they seem to have passed into history as if they were not to be controverted. It has long been assumed by many persons that General McClellan's Harrison's Landing letter to Mr. Lincoln was intended as a political manifesto of his own. The popular shrewdness in making such imputations is always well satisfied with its own wisdom, however little of intellectual or moral penetration may be exercised in making them. And therefore, to present a plain view of a virtuous man, acting from motives in which self has no concern, often seems to be a useless appeal against that which has been popularly pronounced to be unquestionable. But the power to appreciate sincerity and elevation of character, the capacity to do justice upon

facts, the disposition to believe in the existence of pure and disinterested aims, have not wholly fled even from the present age. It was, therefore, with entire confidence that we should not want an audience, and a very large one, that we undertook to give an account of some of the circumstances attending General McClellan's relations to the Administration of President Lincoln, and especially of the strange occurrence of his removal from command after the battle of Antietam. The approbation which we have received from many of the wise and good has fully justified and rewarded our labors.

The breaking out of our civil war found General McClellan in private life, and in a lucrative employment which he could not surrender without great sacrifices. It is no disparagement of the patriotism of any others of the distinguished soldiers of whatever rank, on either side of that contest, to say that McClellan was actuated by a pure sense of duty, and not by political ambition, when he tendered his sword to the Government of the United States. He had been educated in its military service; and he had so learned of its political institutions that every conviction of his intellect and every feeling of his heart bound him to the preservation of the Union. He had had, at a very early age, great opportunities for acquiring mili-

tary knowledge in the war with Mexico. He had been afterward sent, at the expense of the Government, while in the flower of his youth, to increase that knowledge by personal observation of one of the most gigantic wars of modern Europe. The facilities which he there enjoyed, along with colleagues who were much his seniors in age and military rank, had enabled him to accumulate a fund of professional information which was even more extensive than it could have been if he had held a command in either of the contending armies. In Mexico, under our own captain, Scott, he had seen the teachings of his education confirmed—that war is a science. In the Crimea he had seen that science applied on the grandest scale, and in the most exact methods, by the armies of three nations. He had afterward been engaged in employments that gave him an uncommon familiarity with the geographical features, the resources, and the peculiarities of vast regions of our own country. So that, when our national conflict was culminating to a territorial civil war and a struggle for the supremacy of our national Constitution, he did not feel himself at liberty to withhold from the service of his country any part of that wealth of experience and knowledge which his country had enabled him to have. It was a simple case of paying back a debt; and, from the time when he undertook to

discharge it to the moment when he was summarily retired into complete inactivity and intended disgrace, he never did an act, or uttered a word, or wrote a line that was not inspired by a sense of patriotic duty, or that any man can justly impute to a selfish motive.

Probably in all military history there is no sudden and unexplained removal of a commander, who was on the eve of a well-planned movement against the enemy, which furnishes a parallel to this case of General McClellan. Certainly there is none for which it is so difficult to assign a respectable motive. On the 7th of November, when McClellan is about to divide Lee's army, an order suddenly reaches him, requiring him to turn over the command to a general whom neither the army nor the public had reason to regard, and who did not regard himself, as competent to the position, and to go into a disgraced retirement. So extraordinary an act demands investigation. It is one of the unsolved points in the history of the late war, on which the inquirer must enter with the expectation of finding either an adequate or an inadequate reason for the act.

We have for many years been seeking and digesting information on this subject, but, when we began to write upon it, the first thing that occurred to us was the necessity for knowing whether

the subject of General McClellan's removal was laid by Mr. Lincoln before his Cabinet, at any time previous to the issuing of the order, and whether any and what determination was then announced by the President. In order to ascertain this we recently addressed a note to the only surviving member of Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet, and received from him the following reply:

WASHINGTON, *January* 21, 1880.

MY DEAR SIR: I have yours of the 19th, asking if the removal of McClellan from command was discussed in the Cabinet before the order was given, and in reply I have to inform you that it was. The meeting was attended by Halleck, and it was stated by him that the excuses given by McClellan for not moving were untrue. I recollect particularly that in reference to a supply, I think, of shoes, which General McClellan had written were indispensable and had not been received, Halleck undertook to show, by official statements of shipments made, that McClellan had not stated the truth.

I opposed the removal violently, upon the ground that Hooker, who was the person spoken of for the succession, was entirely incompetent for the position. Burnside's name was not mentioned, and I was utterly amazed when I saw it announced. I had to accept as true the statement that McClellan had been making unnecessary delay, although, as it turned out afterward, the charge was wholly unfounded. Governor Curtin was in McClellan's

camp at the time, and afterward stated that it was true that McClellan had not the shoes required for his men to move.

Mr. Lincoln did not decide at that time to remove McClellan, but I saw that he was coming to that conclusion, and I went out to Silver Spring for my father to go that night to the Soldiers' Home, where Mr. Lincoln was then staying, to endeavor to prevent the removal. He accordingly went that night to see Mr. Lincoln, and spent a long time in arguing against the proposal, telling Lincoln that it would be both a military and political blunder for him to take that step ; that the opposition to McClellan came from Chase and Stanton, who were hostile to him (Lincoln), and that the man whom they wanted to supersede McClellan with would be also adverse to him if he succeeded ; and, if he failed, he (Lincoln) would have to bear the reproach of it. Lincoln listened with attention to all my father had to say, but was not communicative himself. But at the end of the conference he rose up and stretched his long arms almost to the ceiling above him, saying: "I said I would remove him if he let Lee's army get away from him, and I must do so. He has got the 'slows,' Mr. Blair!"

It was manifest to me that there was something more than I knew of, of which McClellan's opponents were availing themselves against him. I had stood by McClellan as I did by Grant against the attempts made by Stanton and Chase, and other politicians, in their efforts to overslaugh them, without being in the confidence of either

of these generals. I did not know till McClellan visited me, while attending the Porter trial the winter afterward, and read me his Harrison's Landing letter, what it was that made Lincoln so deaf to my own and my father's efforts. But, when McClellan read that letter, I told him at once that it was that letter which had enabled Stanton and Chase to remove him. It had been used to make Lincoln look upon him as a rival, and he had judged him from that point of view; and, while I believed Lincoln to be as unselfish as any man, he was yet a man, and no man could be told day by day that another was making use of the place he gave him to supersede him in his own place, without being afterward against him and ready to believe that he was both unfriendly and unfit for his position.*

Yours truly,

MONTGOMERY BLAIR.

GEORGE T. CURTIS, Esq., New York.

* [Mr. Blair's explanation of Mr. Lincoln's feelings toward McClellan, and of the mode in which he allowed himself to be influenced by McClellan's enemies, is quite plausible, perhaps it is quite true. But what weakness does it not suggest! General McClellan could not possibly become a formidable political rival to Mr. Lincoln, in 1862, unless he should succeed in crushing the rebellion. To end the war, then and there, by defeating the Confederate forces in front of Richmond, in the summer of 1862, was McClellan's great object and aim; and presumably it was Lincoln's. But Mr. Blair suggests that Mr. Lincoln was told "day by day" that McClellan was trying to "supersede" him, and that this naturally made Mr. Lincoln hostile to McClellan. How lofty and comprehensive was the patriotism that could not bear to be "superseded" by a brilliant and crowning service to the country, if rendered by a general in the field? At this rate, Mr. Lincoln must have gone on indefinitely selecting a series of incompetent

The Cabinet council to which Mr. Blair alludes was held on the 5th of November. The order requiring General McClellan to turn over the command to General Burnside was dated on the same day. No reason for it was ever assigned by the President to General McClellan or to the country. In the absence, therefore, of any avowed reason, coming from Mr. Lincoln himself, we are remitted to the inquiry, what relation the Harrison's Landing letter may have borne to the determination of the President to recall McClellan after the battle of Antietam, and to reduce him to a condition of entire inactivity. We must ask the reader to turn

commanders, because a competent one might become his political rival by succeeding in ending the war! Two years after the Harrison's Landing letter was written, and two years after McClellan had been put into a position in which he could gain no more successes in the war, he was made by the Democratic party their candidate for the Presidency, although he had *not* succeeded in crushing the rebellion. But, as I have said in the text, what happened in 1864 does not throw much light on the state of Mr. Lincoln's feelings toward McClellan in 1862, or upon the causes which may have produced them.

Nothing is more natural than for Presidents to desire a re-election. But if it is to be understood that Mr. Lincoln, his leading friends and advisers, and his party generally, considered in 1862 that for political reasons it would not do to allow General McClellan to become too important in the eyes of his countrymen, by reason of his success as a soldier in suppressing the rebellion, I do not know how there could be sent down to posterity a severer condemnation of them all than is involved in this excuse. Yet this excuse has not been suggested by me. I have only considered what has been suggested by others. If the excuse has any validity at all, it necessarily implies a great deal that is not creditable to those who took General McClellan from the service of the Union.]

back to the letter, in our first article, and to note that it proposed to Mr. Lincoln a certain policy in the prosecution of the war, to be adopted and followed out by *him*, and from which, if any credit or benefit of a political nature was to accrue to any one, it would accrue to Mr. Lincoln. For it is not to be forgotten that this was a private letter. Its existence was not publicly known; and, if Mr. Lincoln had shown it to any persons in Washington, they had kept the secret well among themselves. This remained the condition of things, as to the letter, until long after McClellan's removal from the command. Our readers have seen that one very striking feature of the policy which General McClellan suggested to Mr. Lincoln consisted in a mode in which the emancipation of slaves could be properly made to result from military measures and operations. It was not the same plan that Mr. Lincoln suddenly adopted nearly three months after he received General McClellan's letter, and five days after General McClellan had gained the battle of Antietam. General McClellan's plan proposed that the Government should permanently appropriate slave-property to its own use, recognizing the right of the owner to compensation—a principle which he suggested "might be extended, upon grounds of military necessity and security, to all the slaves in a particular State, thus working

manumission in such State." Mr. Lincoln's subsequent plan attempted to abolish slavery by an Executive decree, without recognizing any right to compensation. It is not necessary to consider here which of these two plans was the wisest, or the most practical. We are not dealing with the merits of either of them; but we are dealing with the historical fact that, in the month of July, 1862, General McClellan, in a private letter to Mr. Lincoln, proposed for his adoption a comprehensive policy in the prosecution of the war, one important part of which embraced a mode of effecting the extinguishment of slavery as a legitimate measure of war. While General McClellan remained at Harrison's Landing, and had as yet gained no striking successes excepting that he had saved the Army of the Potomac from destruction, after which he had been put into a kind of disgrace, his Harrison's Landing letter, still an entirely private document in the hands of Mr. Lincoln, could not have been regarded as a matter for any political anxiety. But when he had saved Washington from capture, and had defeated Lee at the battle of Antietam, if his letter, written three months previously, was suddenly recalled to the recollection of Mr. Lincoln and those of his Cabinet who had seen it, they must have especially remembered his suggestion of a plan for the manumission of

slaves, as a measure of military operations and necessities.

We now come, therefore, to a theory which has been suggested to account for the removal of General McClellan from command after the battle of Antietam. This theory, when fully stated, is as follows: That, with this letter from General McClellan in his possession, Mr. Lincoln was persuaded to believe that, if the writer should succeed in destroying Lee's army, he would become a formidable rival for the next Presidency; that this letter would be McClellan's "platform"; that his platform must therefore be anticipated by an Executive proclamation that slavery was to be exterminated by an Executive decree; that circumstances had compelled Mr. Lincoln, after Pope's defeat at the second Bull Run, to restore McClellan to command, and to permit him to free Maryland from the presence of the enemy; but that, when this had been done, it was politically necessary to prevent McClellan from becoming, by further successes, a competitor in the next Presidential election, and a competitor who would be able to show a prior claim to the policy of emancipation.

This theory derives some color from the fact that Mr. Lincoln suddenly changed his mind on the subject of emancipation. On the 13th of Septem-

ber he told a deputation of clergymen from Chicago that an emancipation proclamation would be no more effective than "the Pope's bull against the comet"; but on the 22d of September, after McClellan had gained the battle of Antietam, Mr. Lincoln issued a proclamation announcing that on the first of the succeeding January he should issue another abolishing slavery in every State that adhered to the rebellion. The theory or explanation of General McClellan's removal from the command of the army, at a moment when he was on the very eve of a great success, is that the Harrison's Landing letter was the moving cause. But, if this is a true explanation of General McClellan's removal, Mr. Lincoln made an enormous mistake in regard to the character and purpose of the Harrison's Landing letter, and the character and purpose of the writer. Through every line of that letter there breathes a manifest intention to present to Mr. Lincoln's mind a comprehensive policy in the prosecution of the war, which Mr. Lincoln was, if he should adopt it, to appropriate to himself; which was to redound to Mr. Lincoln's benefit, so far as it could redound to the personal benefit of any one. There is not a word in the letter which can justify any one in believing that the writer was seeking to lay up political treasure for himself, in the archives of the Government, or in Mr. Lincoln's private reposi-

tories. Among gentlemen, it is usually considered an act of meanness to claim afterward the authorship of a paper which one has given to another who is in a high position of public trust, for adoption as a measure of public policy; and no man, who ever knew General McClellan, can believe that he deliberately planned to commit such an act of meanness. His letter was the letter of one gentleman to another. The writer, it is true, was a general in the service of the Government; the recipient was the head of that Government. But the letter nevertheless was not an official letter; it was a private letter, suggesting to Mr. Lincoln's "private consideration" a certain line of policy for his adoption. Mr. Lincoln desired, when in June he assented to General McClellan's proposal to submit to him his views respecting the whole conduct of the war, that care should be taken to preserve secrecy. Such care was taken. General McClellan wrote the letter with his own hand in his tent at Harrison's Landing, and placed it himself in the hands of Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln need not have shown it to a human being. He might have propounded to his Cabinet the policy which it described, without saying that General McClellan had recommended it. Public men in such positions have often received the most important suggestions from some one else, and have not deemed

themselves bound to disclose their authorship. If Mr. Lincoln had proposed this policy for the consideration of his Cabinet, without saying that it had been suggested by General McClellan, there can be no doubt that it would have had a fair consideration, and possibly it might have been adopted. If it had been, there can be as little doubt that the world never would have known from General McClellan that the suggestion came from him; while he would have been able to say that he concurred in what the President had determined on, and would do everything in his power as a general to carry it out.

General McClellan may well have been astonished, therefore, as we know that he was, when he heard it said, long after his removal from the command, that his private letter to Mr. Lincoln had caused the latter to regard him as having sought by means of it to set his sails for the popular breeze, and that out of his sails the wind had been taken by Mr. Lincoln's proclamation. If ever a man was intent upon anything that was unselfish, and devoid of any purpose but to serve his official superior, it was General McClellan when he sketched that great policy for Mr. Lincoln's private consideration. All that happened in the political world, two years afterward, when General McClellan, by no procurement of his own, was nominated as the

Democratic candidate in the summer of 1864, has of course no relevancy to the cause or causes which operated upon Mr. Lincoln's mind in November, 1862, to make him recall General McClellan from the command of the Army of the Potomac, and to bid him report at Trenton, in the State of New Jersey.

Among the members of Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet in the summer and autumn of 1862, there were two persons who were as unfriendly to Mr. Lincoln as they were to General McClellan. Mr. Chase had reasons of his own for representing to Mr. Lincoln that the Democrats then had General McClellan in training as their future candidate for the Presidency, although it would have been difficult for him to show in what the training consisted. Any one who remembers the condition of Democratic sentiment on the subject of slavery and the proper objects of the war, at the time when General McClellan wrote his letter to Mr. Lincoln, and even down to a much later period, can easily see that the letter never was designed by the writer as a means of recommending himself to that party as their candidate for the Presidency. But Mr. Chase—to borrow an old parliamentary phrase—"took nothing" for his own advantage by his efforts to undermine Mr. Lincoln's confidence in McClellan. He may be dismissed to the innumer-

able company of those who "filed their minds" and gained nothing by it for themselves. The one redeeming part of Mr. Chase's conduct toward McClellan is, that he never pretended to be anything but an enemy. But, in all that scene of infidelity to the military interests of the republic, there stands forth one central figure, prominent in double-dealing, celebrated for duplicity, the arch-hypocrite Stanton. The world does not now learn his amazing insincerity for the first time, or from us. Our proof of it is only cumulative. The character to which that proof relates is one that no man can explain, one that no party and no faction can bear to defend. This man began at an early period to fawn upon McClellan. It is not improbable that the young General, in the frankness of his own nature, and in his readiness to accept all proffered aid in the great public duties which devolved upon him after he became general-in-chief by the advice of General Scott, may have believed in the personal devotion and attachment which this eminent Pennsylvania lawyer professed to himself, to his relatives, and to his friends in the army. But, there was at first a jarring string in these strains of flattery. The part was overacted, and the actor did not, until he was warned, perceive wherein he "o'erstepped the modesty of nature." He thought to recommend himself to McClellan by

the grossest ridicule and abuse of Lincoln. He found that McClellan's sense of propriety did not approve this coarse disparagement of his official superior. But, as Mr. Stanton was known to be a man of high ability and distinction in his profession, and as Mr. Lincoln was disposed to believe that he would be a valuable Secretary of War, both because of his energy and because of his avowed friendship for McClellan, the latter, when consulted, gave his influence with the President for the introduction of Mr. Stanton into the Cabinet.

There is a saying—"something musty"—about the displacement of ladders after an elevation has been reached. As time went on, as Mr. Stanton's ambition grew, and "his infant fortune came to age" with the increase of his power, he came to know how necessary McClellan was to Mr. Lincoln, and how important to the country it was that the best relations should exist between them. Knowing this, he determined that McClellan should be ruined. For Lincoln he had so much contempt that he thought he could be trusted to ruin himself. Yet to the last hour of his intercourse with McClellan, and down to the final consummation of his purpose, Mr. Stanton professed to McClellan and his friends an unalterable fidelity, and an unchangeable conviction of his importance to the public interests: while, at the very same time, the occasion-

al ebullitions of his hostility, bursting forth from his arrogant temper, in the presence of others, and his official acts, betrayed the object to which his hatred was carrying him, long before it was finally attained. The army saw it, if the people of the Union did not. McClellan was to be destroyed by making Lincoln distrust him. The scheme succeeded—the deed was done. But what of the chief conspirator?

Dante, as he walks through the infernal realms, protected by the great Mantuan Spirit "whose fame still lasts in the world, and will last as long as time," tells us of the common herd, undistinguishable from one another, who are grouped in eternal suffering according to the nature of their besetting sin. These are they who are damned by classification. We do not learn their names or nations. We only see them, in crowds, in a situation of dreadful appropriateness to their peculiar transgression. But, when the poet encounters one of those historical personages on whom, because of the consequences which his acts have entailed upon his country or mankind, there should be fastened all the infamy that is his due, we have the individual and his history touched by the master's stroke, and the sufferer stands for ever alone in the awful characterization of his fate. One of these ghastly objects of retribution is that Bertran de Born who

"gave the evil counsels" which separated those who should have been united. The spectacle of this false counselor to a prince, which the poet describes, is too horrible to be transferred in detail to these pages. But, if any one is disposed to wonder that this image has risen up before us as we write of a passage in our national annals, let him count, if he can, the soldiers' graves, the widows' and the orphans' tears, the treasure needlessly squandered, the war needlessly prolonged, the whole vast sum of misery and sorrow which must be charged to the malice that one man bore to another. And, when he sickens in the contemplation of these accumulated woes, let him turn to the so-called historical literature of the country, and note how, from the same source, it has been poisoned with lies. We must thread this dreary maze of Stanton's treachery and Lincoln's weakness, until we have reached conclusions on which it is fit that a final judgment should rest.*

* An illustration of Mr. Stanton's character comes to us while we write. On the 3d of April, 1862, General Franklin received an order to embark his division for the Peninsula, to be under the command of General McClellan in the advance upon Richmond. Calling at the War Department on that evening, General Franklin met General McDowell. The following account is taken from the "Philadelphia Times" of April 28, 1877, in the words of General Franklin: "General McDowell informed me that the Secretary of War had told him about an hour before that General McClellan intended to work by strategy and not by fighting, and that he should not have another man from his

It seems to us most remarkable, in all this concatenation of conspiracies against the usefulness

Department; that all of the enemies of the Administration centered around him; and the Secretary accused him of having political ambition. Also, that he had not left the number of troops to defend Washington that the President required; in other words, that he had disobeyed the President's orders. General McDowell remonstrated against the step which was about to be taken, arguing that, if General McClellan had political aspirations, they would be forwarded by the very course which the Administration was taking in this case. He used all the arguments which he could bring to bear, to convince the Secretary that he was making a mistake in ordering the detachment of his corps. The result was, General McDowell's corps was detached from the Army of the Potomac, and was marched to Catlett's Station on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, where it could do no possible good. General McClellan's plan of turning Yorktown, by the movement of McDowell's corps on the north bank of the York River, was utterly destroyed. The Army of the Potomac was forced to stay a whole month on the Peninsula uselessly, and the capture of Richmond, which in all human probability would have been made in the month of May, had General McClellan's plan been carried out, was deferred for three years."

General Franklin now writes to us as follows, inclosing a copy of his paper in the "Philadelphia Times": "On the evening of the arrival of General McDowell's corps at Catlett's Station (about April 8th or 9th), my division, which then formed part of the corps, was ordered to join General McClellan by way of Alexandria. While it was marching to Alexandria I went to the Peninsula, saw and conferred with the General [McClellan], and returned to Alexandria to embark the division on the transports. When I was ready to start, I was informed that the President and Secretary of War wished to see me. I first saw Mr. Stanton. He was very cordial, was glad I was going to the Peninsula, would at once determine a question of my rank which was before him. He desired me to give his love to McClellan, and to say to him that he had his best wishes for his success, and that any help to him which he required that his Department could furnish would be most cheerfully accorded. In fact, nothing could have been more satisfactory to any friend of McClellan than this interview would have been to me, had not the recollection of McDowell's interview with Stanton of April 3d

and success of a military man who was serving the country with singleness of purpose and with no ambition but to do his military duty, that Mr. Lincoln, with his imputed shrewdness, did not see to the very bottom of the hearts of men who wished to put enmity between him and this faithful soldier. Mr. Lincoln should have had the wis-

been fresh in my mind. I never saw Stanton after this interview. The interview with the President amounted to nothing."

We do not know where, in the history of any country, there is anything so grotesque as the fact that the destinies of a great war were to a large extent in the hands of a mere lawyer who, apart from his propensity to resort to duplicity when there was no need for it whatever, was completely destitute of all military knowledge or judgment. Such administrative faculty as Mr. Stanton had was due to the energy of an imperious will. President Buchanan, who gauged Mr. Stanton accurately when he was his Attorney-General, has left the following brief description of him, which now lies before us in Mr. Buchanan's handwriting :

"Mr. Stanton was an able, astute, and somewhat overbearing, dogmatic lawyer. He had been eminently and deservedly successful at the bar. His personal integrity has never been doubted. He was, however, deficient in the knowledge of a statesman ; but he performed his duties as Attorney-General in a respectable and satisfactory manner. He had not the calmness and sober judgment that would have fitted him for an important administrative office. He was rash and impetuous. It was his nature to act from the impulse of the moment, and he did not stop to inquire into the remote consequences of his decision." This was evidently written before Mr. Stanton became Mr. Lincoln's Secretary of War. What it says of his personal integrity relates to all matters of money. In that respect Mr. Stanton's character was without a stain. His personal duplicity, toward those who trusted him and whom he professed to serve, is an enigma which those who knew him best never could understand. He was as false to Buchanan as he was to others, and it is to be hoped that Mr. Buchanan died without knowing that he was so.

dom to remember that the Harrison's Landing letter, instead of affording even a political reason for depriving the country of General McClellan's military services, was entirely under his (Mr. Lincoln's) own control; for General McClellan had not divulged its contents, and as a man of honor he could never have divulged them for any purpose but to shield himself from an unjust imputation. After it had been imputed to him that he wrote the letter for a selfish political purpose, he included a copy of it in his report, that the whole world might judge of its character. A portion of his countrymen, knowing little of the facts, and paying but little heed to the character of the letter, have permitted an unjust impression to remain in their minds. It is time for them to correct their impressions, and to observe that, if Mr. Lincoln had looked into the letter, when McClellan's enemies were perpetually trying to awaken his jealousy, he must have seen that, whatever else it was, it was no "platform" for a Democratic politician to put himself upon in the summer of 1862. But, according to the theory on which we are commenting, Mr. Lincoln, although he had it entirely in his power, in the autumn of 1862, to recognize the true character of that letter as a private suggestion of a policy to be adopted by him and made his own if he should think well of it, could not,

nevertheless, resist the representations of McClellan's enemies that it was designed for a very different purpose. No man can read that letter now, whether he knows General McClellan or not, and find in it any trace of the design that was imputed to him. No man who knows General McClellan, and knows the political history of the time when the letter was written, can believe that he ever had such a design.*

On the night of the same day on which the removal of General McClellan was considered in the Cabinet, the elder Mr. Blair, as the reader has seen, visited Mr. Lincoln, and patriotically endeavored to dissuade him from that step. At the meeting of the Cabinet on the 5th Mr. Lincoln made

* It must be remembered that the letter was written in July, 1862. One copy of it remained in manuscript in General McClellan's possession. In August, 1863, General McClellan transmitted to the War Department his report on the military operations in which he had been engaged. The report remained in the Adjutant-General's office until it was sent into Congress at its next session, which commenced in December, 1863. It contained a correct copy of the Harrison's Landing letter. Soon after the report began to be printed by the printer of public documents, the newspaper press began to comment upon and to copy from it. An imperfect copy of the letter appeared in a New York paper in January, 1864; but how it was obtained is not known. An edition of General McClellan's report was published by Sheldon & Co., at New York, in the spring of 1864; and from that edition the public obtained the first authentic copy of the Harrison's Landing letter that was ever authorized by General McClellan. He was removed from command and sent into retirement in November, 1862. In the early part of November, 1864, he resigned from the army.

no allusion to the Harrison's Landing letter, for some of the gentlemen present did not know of its existence. The discussion in the Cabinet turned wholly on General McClellan's activity as a commander, and his alleged misrepresentation of the actual condition of his army in respect to supplies, after the battle of Antietam. When Mr. Blair saw the President on that evening, the latter remarked that he had said he would remove McClellan if he allowed Lee's army to get away from him, and that he must remove him. When Mr. Blair saw Mr. Lincoln on the next day, Mr. Lincoln said, "Mr. Blair, I was obliged to play *shut pan* to you last night." The order for the change in the command had then come out, and Mr. Lincoln felt obliged to account to Mr. Blair for not having told him on the previous evening that the matter had been decided. The question arises, therefore, To whom had the President said that he would remove McClellan if he allowed Lee's army to get away from him? Certainly he never said so to General McClellan himself. On the field of Antietam, twelve days after Lee's army had recrossed the Potomac, Mr. Lincoln told General McClellan that he did not intend to displace him, and that he was not to move on the enemy until he felt that he was entirely ready. On the 6th of October the President ordered him

to pursue Lee ; but on the 21st the President knew that it was at least doubtful whether he was in a condition to do so, and a little later the President learned that he certainly was not. If we go forward to the 5th of November, after McClellan, properly supplied, had placed his army in the best possible positions for dividing Lee's forces and beating them in detail, we find the Cabinet council sitting at the White House debating the question of his removal from command. At that meeting the old story of unnecessary delay after the battle of Antietam was again trumped up, and, notwithstanding the information that had been obtained by Colonel Scott and communicated to the President, the Secretary of War, and General Halleck, which made it certain that the delay had been wholly due to the want of indispensable supplies, at least one member of the Cabinet, who had been a steadfast supporter of General McClellan upon public grounds, was made to admit, on General Halleck's "statements," that there had been unnecessary delay after the battle of Antietam. We do not know how to characterize that scene at the President's council-table. We were about to use a word which we withhold. We can only point to the fact that, at the very moment of that discussion on the proposal to remove General McClellan from command, his headquarters were at Rector-

town; his army, in admirable discipline and spirit, was disposed in position for successive attacks upon Lee's divided troops; and it was yet an undecided question whether Lee was to escape, while the chances were entirely against him. For General Lee, however, that question was decided by the change in the Federal command—a change that was made upon a pretext which more than one person around that council-board knew to be false.

Involved as Mr. Lincoln was in the toils laid for him by Chase, Stanton, and Halleck, we do not believe that he had it in his power to assign publicly a reason for removing McClellan. The subject of McClellan's allowing Lee's army to escape was not discussed in the Cabinet. On the evening of the day on which that discussion took place, Mr. Lincoln had to say something to the elder Mr. Blair, and he went back to an old promise which he had given to somebody, that he would remove McClellan if he allowed Lee's army to get away from him. But at that moment McClellan was about to attack Longstreet, and the result, which had not occurred, could not have been the reason why Mr. Lincoln had already allowed the order to be issued. At the Cabinet meeting, the reason urged was a delay that had occurred on the field of Antietam during the three weeks that ended on

the last days of October. After the Cabinet council broke up, there must have been a private conference between Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Chase and Mr. Stanton, during which Mr. Lincoln consented that the order should be issued, and that the name of General Burnside should be inserted in it as the successor of McClellan. But, if Mr. Lincoln had ever been asked thereafter to assign the reason why he allowed that order to be issued, we are entirely unable to see what he could have said. But, valuing McClellan highly, as we believe he did, and knowing as he did that McClellan was at that moment pursuing Lee's army by his orders, Mr. Lincoln was so entrapped by McClellan's enemies that he could not extricate himself without sacrificing McClellan; for he knew that Halleck's "statements," made and listened to at the Council-board, could be made elsewhere, and would be made to the public if he allowed McClellan to remain at the head of the army. This would have produced a public issue respecting the mode in which affairs had been managed by the War Department, in meeting or failing to meet General McClellan's requisitions during the month of October.

There is another theory, less common than the one which we have thus far considered, by which some persons think that General McClellan's re-

moval from command is to be accounted for. This theory is entertained by officers of the army, who, while abstaining habitually from all party or political relations, were deeply interested in observing the course of the Administration in the prosecution of the war. It is this: That in the summer and autumn of 1862, after the defeat of Pope, followed by McClellan's expulsion of the Confederate troops from Maryland, the President's advisers, who were represented by Mr. Chase and Mr. Stanton, did not desire further military successes in the war until they should have made it a war for the extermination of slavery. In support of this theory those who entertain it point to the following facts: That if McClellan had captured Richmond in November or December, 1862, the proclamation would have remained, as what Mr. Lincoln described it, a "bull against the comet"; because, if the rebellion had been crushed then and there, the Constitution, notwithstanding the proclamation, must have remained what it always had been; that, after McClellan, came Burnside and Hooker, who were not more effectually sustained and supported by the Administration than McClellan had been; and that when it was determined to remove McClellan, so that Richmond might not fall prematurely, it was a sort of hap-hazard choice that at the last moment of deliberation made Burnside his

immediate successor. This is not a theory which has been the result of an afterthought. There were intelligent and observing officers of that army who knew that McClellan, on the one hand, was straining every nerve to overtake and defeat the Confederate forces at the moment when he was displaced, and who, on the other hand, believed, at that time, that he was not permitted to succeed because the Administration did not then desire success. It is impossible, of course, to penetrate into the secret counsels of those who then controlled the course of the war. What we can see, however, is that the removal of General McClellan entailed the frightful slaughter at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, and the Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania. In our last paper we presented to our readers an accurate sketch, from which they could learn with what excellent strategy McClellan was operating, to insure the fall of Richmond with the least expenditure of precious lives. We doubt if one reader out of every hundred has ever before understood how the severance of the communications between the two parts of Lee's army, and the forcing of Longstreet back upon Gordonsville—results that were within McClellan's grasp on the 7th of November, 1862—would have opened to him an almost unopposed march upon Richmond. Yet this commander, thus arrested by his own Government

when he was about to achieve a great success—arrested from a motive of statecraft, or from a motive of personal jealousy, or from a combination of both —is the man whose reputation has been slurred because he did not sacrifice his men by hecatombs, from which nothing could be gained, but sought to attain his object by occupying positions that would make a battle and a victory worth what they might cost.*

* At Warrenton, after the soldiers had learned that McClellan was to leave them, as he rode through the ranks that lined the road for miles, the men called out to him repeatedly, "Come back, Little Mac!" McClellan turned to an officer who rode by his side, and, with tears gathering in his eyes, asked, "What do you think of all this?" "It is hard upon you, but best for us." "Why?" "Because you are not permitted to succeed, and, as the people in Washington do not intend that we shall fight at present, we shall be saved defeat and mortification. You will come back when you are wanted." Laying his hand on the officer's shoulder, the General asked, "How did you learn so much?" Our informant adds that he did not think at the time how soon he was to witness Fredericksburg.

A very fair writer on the "Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac" (Swinton, New York, 1866) was at a loss to understand why Burnside abandoned at Warrenton all of McClellan's plans, and, turning his back on Lee's army, marched his own army to Fredericksburg. He says that this project, although not approved at Washington, *was assented to;* that is to say, the Administration abandoned the pursuit of Lee's army, and allowed their own army to be transferred to Fredericksburg, without one effort to carry out McClellan's plan of operations. This could have been done only for the purpose of obtaining a new base, where the Army of the Potomac could remain inactive until the spring. But the swift pursuit of Lee, whose whole forces arrived on the south bank of the Rappahannock, for the relief of Fredericksburg, within a week after Burnside's army had reached the river, disconcerted the whole project of "winter quarters" at Fredericksburg, and ended in conflicts which produced what Mr. Swinton justly calls "a

In reference to the political motives by which Mr. Lincoln is supposed to have been influenced, we have considered all the theories that have ever been suggested. Whatever theory of political motive is the one that ought to be adopted, the deplorable fact remains that the country lost the services of General McClellan, and that great disasters ensued. At Fredericksburg, in December, 1862, under Burnside, the Federal losses, in killed, wounded, and missing, were 12,321. At Chancellorsville, under Hooker, in May, 1863, the killed and wounded were 11,033. These losses were entirely uncompensated by any advantage or prestige. In June the Confederates invaded Pennsylvania, and were barely checked at Gettysburg. Remembering these consequences, we are forced also to remember that, if anything in war can be pronounced to have been so highly probable as to amount to a moral certainty, it is that, if McClellan had been allowed to fight Lee again, there would have been another victory, which would have insured the capture of Richmond before the end of

slaughter the most bloody and the most useless of the war." While General Burnside must be considered to have been excessively rash in attempting to carry Lee's positions by assault, it should be remembered that he was at Fredericksburg at all by the assent of the Government. The motive which led to the assent is believed, by many officers of high intelligence, to have been a secret determination to let the war in Virginia stand still until the effect of the emancipation proclamation had been fully developed.

the year 1862. The blood with which the Wilderness was afterward watered would have been saved.

We shall now close our review of this part of General McClellan's military career with a summary, which may assist our readers in forming an opinion of the justice of a criticism which has long been used to excuse the conduct of the Administration. The criticism has most commonly been put in this form: that while General McClellan had great accomplishments as an organizer of armies and as an engineer, yet as a general at the head of troops he lacked decision, promptness, and vigor, from a constitutional infirmity which made him reluctant to strike a blow until he had accumulated every possible advantage for delivering it. The soundness of this criticism — supposing it to be honestly made—may be tested by the history of the period over which we have passed in these papers. We have followed General McClellan for the space of a little less than five months, from the 26th of June to the 7th of November, 1862. The week extending from the 26th of June to the 4th of July, in which there was more severe fighting than any one of our armies in an equal period ever encountered, ended in the rescue of the Army of the Potomac from an extraordinary peril, into which it was brought by the blundering folly of its own

Government. No competent critic will deny that the tactics, the force of will, the indomitable perseverance, and the admirable judgment displayed by McClellan during the seven days' march to the James, evinced the highest attributes of a military commander; for no such critic will question that to rescue an army, on such a march, from the clutches of a superior force, is as great an achievement as to fight and win a pitched battle with equal or nearly equal numbers on the two sides. From the 4th of July to the 5th of August, a period of comparative inactivity on the James necessarily followed, in consequence of the indecision of the Government as to what was to be done. From the 5th of August to the 16th, McClellan could do nothing but execute the orders of his superiors to remove his army to the front of Washington. From the 16th of August to the 27th, he was engaged in transferring the different bodies of his army to the command of General Pope. From the 27th of August until the morning of the 2d of September, he was without the command of more than a hundred men.

Into the next two weeks following the 2d of September, when called upon to save the capital, he crowded an amount of energy, skill, promptness, and vigor, which should alone have made a great reputation, if he had never done anything

else. If we break up those two weeks into their important subdivisions, we have, first, the five days which followed his resumption of command, when he took a defeated and demoralized army that was swarming toward the capital in the night, immediately restored its discipline, posted it within the defenses of the city, reconstructed some of its organizations, and then threw it forward on a march to intercept an enemy flushed with his recent victory and preparing to come down upon the Maryland side of the Potomac. During the week that intervened between the 7th and the 13th of September, McClellan was moving his columns on five parallel routes, so that he might encounter Lee before the latter could descend upon Washington by an unoccupied and unguarded road, either next to or away from the river. In one week this march was accomplished, notwithstanding the cautions with which it had to be made. On the 13th, Lee's plans were revealed; and it affords abundant proof of the sound judgment with which McClellan had conducted his march, and of the spirit and efficiency which he had restored to the troops, that the very first blow which he struck sent the whole Confederate army into retreat. The blow that was given at South Mountain was dealt on the twelfth day after McClellan resumed the command, and on the next day after that on which Lee's position be-

came known; and on the same day General Franklin, one of McClellan's most energetic lieutenants, attacked and carried the pass called Crampton's Gap, on the left, while the main body of McClellan's troops attacked the Confederates at South Mountain. In three days after South Mountain, the Confederate army was overtaken on the field of Antietam, and on the night of the fourth day its shattered forces were withdrawn into Virginia, after a desperately fought battle which lasted for fourteen hours.

Carping criticism, imputations of "slowness," charges of hesitation and want of vigor, vanish into the realm of nonsense, in the face of such achievements. When we look back upon what was accomplished in the two weeks that followed McClellan's restoration to command, with an army which he took off the hands of a general under whom it had been shockingly beaten, and when we remember that McClellan, as he marched out of Washington, left behind him in high authority many officials who wished him anything but success, we can only wonder at the easy credulity of that portion of the contemporary public who supposed him to be either slow or inefficient as a commander. The false impressions which one age derives from its own prejudices, that have been industriously cultivated for the transient policies of political or per-

sonal hostility, are a poor guide to the estimation in which a man is to be held in history. Beyond the range of their influence, even to-day, the military reputation of General McClellan among the best European judges is so high that it has often been said that he would have terminated the war in November or December, 1862, if he had been kept in the field and been supported and supplied as other generals subsequently were. We have heard, from a source that left us no reason to doubt the authenticity of the anecdote, that General von Moltke once expressed this opinion to an American who in conversation gave him to understand that "some of us in America do not estimate McClellan so highly as we do some others of our generals." "It may be so," said the great Prussian commander, "but let me tell you that, if your Government had supported General McClellan in the field as they should have done, your war would have been ended two years sooner than it was."

But it is not necessary to look abroad in order to measure what we lost by the removal of McClellan from the public service. The history of the war in Virginia, after Antietam and after the removal of McClellan from command, is a history of the endeavor of our Government to re-establish the Union armies in the position before Richmond which they had occupied in June, 1862, when the

Government withdrew from McClellan its promised support, and left him to save his army by the flank movement to the James. That subsequent history embraces the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, and other fierce fights along the bloody overland route from Washington to Richmond. With these before him, the reader is compelled to ask himself whether, after Antietam, there was any battle fought between those two cities in which the Confederates were beaten and driven from the field; and why the patriotic North was called upon for a lavish expenditure of treasure and of men to supply the places of the countless dead who fell in the effort to regain that old position before the capital of Virginia. The enemy fell back before the overwhelming forces of the inexhaustible Union. In 1865 they were utterly crushed and subdued, on the same ground from which, in 1862, the Army of the Potomac was withdrawn, in disregard of the earnest appeals of its commander, who did not cease to reiterate the memorable words of his dispatch to General Halleck, of August 4, 1862: "Here is the true defense of Washington; it is here, on the banks of the James, that the fate of the Union is to be decided."

Yet it was not for the glory snatched from McClellan that we have ever grieved. All talent,

power, accomplishment, knowledge, experience, skill, and valor of the soldier form, when rightly regarded, a trust for his country; and we are sure that General McClellan never has regretted and never can regret that he so regarded and used the gifts which it pleased Heaven to bestow upon him. Among all the distinguished military men of this or any other age, of whom the world knows so much as it knows of McClellan, there has been no man whose ambition was so perfectly unalloyed by the base element of self-seeking at the expense of others, and no man who has suffered so much injustice from official superiors. Yet that injustice has not caused him to challenge his detractors upon the issues that were made against him. Not at the time when that injustice was committed, not in the long period of eighteen years that has since elapsed, has he broken the reticence which is a part of his nature when his own public conduct or that of others is in question. That he will at some time break this silence, so far as to relate facts which he alone can tell, at least for those who are to come after us, his contemporaries should, as we believe they do, earnestly desire.*

* [As no official explanation was ever given by the Executive for the removal of General McClellan from the command of the Army of the Potomac after the battle of Antietam, one is obliged to discuss the unofficial and conjectural explanations and theories which have been supposed to account for it. After it was done, a committee of Congress

was used as a means for producing throughout the loyal North a conviction that it was done because General McClellan was incompetent. This was the famous "Committee on the Conduct of the War": a body which, in addition to all the other mischief that it did, contrived to produce and disseminate a monstrous amount of falsehood for the enlightenment of the people. This joint-committee of the two Houses of Congress, consisting of three members of the Senate and four members of the House, was appointed in December, 1861, while General McClellan was organizing the Army of the Potomac, and planning the military operations that were to be undertaken throughout the southern, western, and southwestern regions of the country. The committee were "to inquire into the conduct of the present war." They sat from the time of their appointment until April 3, 1863, a period of eighteen months, and, at the end of that time, Mr. Benjamin F. Wade, a Senator from Ohio, Chairman of the Committee, presented their Report to the Senate. The Report began with the statement that the Committee "could perceive no necessity for recommending any particular legislation to Congress." They were of opinion that at each succeeding session of Congress since July, 1861, all the needful legislation, required to meet the exigencies of the war, had been enacted from time to time. This *naïve* declaration rendered it certain that the Committee was not raised for any legislative purpose. For what, then, was it instituted? To answer this question one must ascertain what they did. The Report, the journal of the Committee, and the testimony taken, show that they occupied themselves, through eighteen months, in interferences with the Executive duties, in examining officers of the army about different battles and the conduct of campaigns, and occasionally taking the testimony of other officials on these subjects. The Committee certainly rendered no aid to the Executive in "the conduct of the war"; and it is one of the singular proofs of the confusion of functions then prevailing, that this intermeddling with Executive duties by a committee of Congress was tolerated. But while this Committee had no ostensible object that could be justified, it became a machine that could be turned to political uses. The *animus* of their Report toward General McClellan is apparent throughout. They made a document which, when printed and circulated under the authority of Congress, would be useful in justifying his removal from command after the battle of Antietam, although they could not, any more than the Executive, assign an official reason for displacing him, or an unofficial reason that would be consistent with justice,

truth, or public policy. Annoying as the doings of this Committee must have been to the Executive, while they were going on, their Report was so shaped that it became serviceable in giving to an excuse for the removal of McClellan the appearance of a solemn finding of important facts by a Congressional Committee. Thus, after having reviewed General McClellan's Peninsula campaign in a very unfair way, upon testimony taken and arranged to suit themselves, the Report proceeded to say:

"Your Committee having gone so fully into the details of the Peninsula campaign, do not deem it necessary to devote so much space to the campaign in Maryland. The same mind that controlled the movements upon the Peninsula controlled those in Maryland, and the same general features characterize the one campaign that characterized the other. In each may be seen the same unreadiness to move promptly and act vigorously; the same desire for more troops before advancing; and the same references to the great superiority of numbers on the part of the enemy. Your Committee, therefore, content themselves with referring briefly to the leading operations of the campaign."

Will any reader now believe that this Report, pretending to refer to the leading operations of the Maryland campaign, said not one word about the battle of Antietam! Incredible as it may seem, such is the fact.

The conclusions of this Committee respecting General McClellan's characteristics as a commander could be reached only by suppressing some, or by omitting to gather all, of the facts; and, accordingly, the Report, the journal, and the evidence, in reference to either of McClellan's campaigns, are utterly unreliable as sources of history, now or hereafter. But as a political document, intended for a political purpose, they were efficient. Fifteen thousand copies of the Report and the testimony were printed and circulated. No one need be surprised, therefore, at the amount of prejudice and ignorance concerning General McClellan that has been transmitted from that day to this.]

A TRIBUTE TO McCLELLAN.

ALTHOUGH but measurably recovered from the shock which, in common with many thousands throughout the country, I suffered when the sudden death of General McClellan was announced, I can not longer delay my tribute to his memory. All of the very remarkable persons whom I have known and lost in the course of my life were much older than myself. In our earlier years the death of men who were our elders, however distinguished or important they may have been, seems in the natural course of things. It does not affect us with that sinking of the heart which we feel when, later in life, we are called to mourn one who was much younger than ourselves, and who we fondly hoped would be among the few mourners at our own departure. In McClellan, I have lost all that the country has lost and more; for he was not only a public man of great distinction and rare character, but he was to me, as to very many others, a most dear friend, whose presence was a benediction, in

whose society there was perpetual enjoyment of the highest nature, and whose death has made a void that can not be filled. As one stands over the grave of such a man, and exclaims, with Milton mourning for Lycidas,

"He hath not left his peer,"

it matters not whether others think that he had peers or superiors. What he was to us is all that we can think of—of the one irreparable loss that afflicts us as no other ever has.

I first saw him soon after he had graduated from West Point and had received his commission as second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers. This was in the year 1846. At this time he came to Boston, where I then resided, to attend the wedding of his elder brother, Dr. McClellan of Philadelphia, who married into a Boston family with which I was distantly connected. The young lieutenant was a bright, round, alert youth, a little under the ordinary height, with a highly intelligent expression of countenance and a quick eye. He was perfectly simple in his manners, although entirely self-possessed, and in every inch a gentleman. As I remember him at this distance of nine-and-thirty years, he was, as in his later life, quite a muscular person, his frame giving promise of that power of activity and endurance for which he was

afterward noted. His well-developed head was set, by a short neck, above broad shoulders, and firmness and character were about his mouth, tempered by a sweet smile. I do not think I deceive myself when I recollect him as having, even at that early age, much of the same winning attractiveness which so many have felt in his riper years. Young men who are just fledged from college or other public institution of learning are not always very interesting persons. McClellan at twenty was the most interesting young fellow of his age that I ever met, and I imagine that as a mere boy he must have been a very manly person, without a particle of what is often offensive in boys who affect manliness. There never could have been any sort of affectation in him at any time. He did not need the attrition of the world to take out of him any native or acquired nonsense, for his nature was the most genuine and the freest from anything like conceit that could be imagined.

I never saw him again until his name was in all men's mouths, for praise or for detraction, long, long years afterward. I had heard of him, indeed, as a gallant young officer in the Mexican War, who had greatly distinguished himself in whatever he had to do. I was aware that he had afterward been sent abroad, during the administration of President Pierce, along with two older officers, to

observe the operations of the contending forces in the Crimea; and I was also aware that he had made a report which evinced how well he had studied the art of war in the camps of those European armies, and how much he had profited in his profession by that opportunity. Of course I observed, on the breaking out of our civil war, how he was distinguishing himself in the West, and what efficient service he was rendering to the cause of the Union, before he was called to Washington to take a high command; how he organized the Army of the Potomac in the winter of 1861–'62; how he led it into Virginia upon a plan of campaign conceived with the most admirable design, and wanting no element of success save the steady co-operation and loyal support of the Government that he left behind him in Washington, that had sent him into the field at the head of an army for which the country was indebted mainly to him, and to which that Government owed a faithful support of its commander. I knew, as others knew, and lamented as others did, how his plans had been more than once frustrated by those who suffered a weak jealousy of his rising reputation and popularity to obscure their perceptions of his great importance to the Union which he was so faithfully serving and his importance to themselves; how he became an object of distrust and dislike to one portion of the

people and their rulers, because of a fear that he would become too dear to the majority of the nation. I saw, as every one saw, how the Army of the Potomac was put into the greatest peril by successive blunders of the Administration; how the President was obliged to rely on McClellan to save it from annihilation; how he rescued it by the bloody march to the James, without any loss of its honor or its prestige; how he was then refused the re-enforcements which would have enabled him to advance on Richmond; how he was ordered to withdraw his army toward Washington; how he was separated from that army and relegated to inactivity; how he was not allowed to lead even a regiment when General Pope was about to be driven in upon Washington. And then, when the capital was in imminent peril, I knew, as every one knew, that McClellan was called upon to save it, and how nobly he responded to the call. Finally, I saw, as every one saw, South Mountain and Antietam, the liberation of Maryland, the last advance of McClellan into Virginia, the near probability of his crushing the forces of the Confederates in detail, his sudden and unexplained removal from the command, and the attempt to disgrace him in the eyes of his countrymen by directing him to report for orders at a place remote from the scene of war and from the seat of the Government. All this strange

course of events I followed with the deepest interest and the clearest conviction that the Government was only prolonging the war and rendering necessary a then immeasurable expenditure of blood and treasure.

General McClellan was sent into a forced retirement in November, 1862. I had shortly before removed to the city of New York; and when in the course of that winter McClellan came to that city and occupied a house which his friends presented to him, busying himself, with the aid of his staff, in preparing his report of his campaigns, I renewed my acquaintance with him. I was anxious to see the man who had risen to such high distinction at so early an age, who was so differently regarded by the two political parties, and who had been made the most conspicuous instance, certainly in our own history or indeed in any modern history, of a general separated from the service of his country when it was engaged in a great war for the preservation of its national existence, when it needed all his accomplishments and influence and powers, and when it could not have them because he might become an object of too much public admiration! Whatever other men might think, my own conviction was clear that as a citizen of the United States, deeply concerned for the preservation of the Union and the Constitution, I had

been wronged, as all other Union men had been wronged, by the taking of General McClellan from the public service. From the time of my first visit to him to the day of his lamented death we have been near friends.

Three-and-twenty years of close intimacy and of constant observation of the man have given me a right to speak of him to others. But I specially desire to speak to the younger generations of the republic. I shall speak of him in words that will be measured, but they will not be stinted by any fear of criticism.

I believe that I understood his feelings, his principles, his unfailing sense of duty, his habitual and unswerving fidelity to every obligation, his rare charity toward others, his tenderness and his manliness. In every relation of life, to his family and friends, to his fellow-men and to his God, he was ever the same person, in whom the one predominant trait was the completeness of his moral and intellectual nature and the strength and beauty of his character. The basis of his moral character was a firm religious faith. The basis of his intellectual character was a comprehensive power to understand any question, subject or occasion on which he had to act. As a soldier he should be rated very high. As a statesman I have always rated him equally high. I have not known

any man not specially trained in the philosophy of politics whose views of public and constitutional questions were so sound and wise as his. His reading was never confined to his profession, and it was far ampler and more various than the world knew of. He had traveled much, and his knowledge of mankind was wide and accurate. But, highly as I have always estimated his intellectual powers, his accomplishments and acquirements, I dwell with peculiar fondness and pride upon the almost absolute perfection of his personal character, for it came as near to perfection as was possible for human nature. He has gone to his grave—a too early grave—with no shadow resting upon his name. No unworthy act or word, no occurrence in his whole life for which those who loved him need blush, rises up to alloy our grief and to add to it a bitter pang. There is nothing to be extenuated or excused. It is for this that his fame stands and will stand conspicuous—shall I not say unrivaled? It was for this that vast crowds followed his bier with such touching reverence when his remains were borne in grand and solemn simplicity to their last resting place, which overlooks the Delaware at the capital of his adopted State.

Undoubtedly it was his strong religious nature that gave such completeness to his moral character, and preserved him unspotted from the world,

although he lived constantly in the world of society, of affairs, and of many and various interests. I speak of nothing that may not now be told when I relate that in his household every morning of his life began and every evening of his life ended with a simple religious service, at which any guest who was with him was always present; and who that ever heard the sweet confiding tones of his voice in those unaffected petitions and thanks to his Maker can ever forget them?

It is not, in my judgment, premature to forecast the estimation in which he will be finally held in history. There are some things in regard to his career as a general that are incontrovertible. That success which the contemporary public thought the only proof of greatness, which was not always his, but the want of which can detract nothing from his true renown, will not be the measure that those who are to come after us will apply to him. They will seek to know where rests the responsibility for his not ending our civil war when and as he hoped to end it. Their scrutiny must necessarily be turned upon the conduct of those who were his official superiors. They will be uninfluenced by the popular clamor of the day for immediate victories; a clamor that was without any comprehension of the means by which victories have to be won. They will have to read of a general sent into the field at

the head of the finest army the United States ever had, which he had created out of raw and unorganized levies, had disciplined into the utmost efficiency, and taught to obey and second him as troops have rarely obeyed and seconded a leader. They will have to read of a government remaining at the seat of authority, composed of mere civilians, and without a single military adviser whose judgment was of high value. They will have to learn of this general that he had for many months studied the details of the campaign which he was to undertake, and made all his plans with admirable forecast; that his success depended, as under such circumstances success must always depend, upon the prompt co-operation of the government at home in all that a general has undertaken, and upon its wise abstention from all unnecessary interference. They will give due heed to the difficulties and responsibilities which surrounded and rested upon the head of that government; but, after all has been weighed and sifted, there will remain the question whether this general was sustained as he should have been. In answering this question posterity will note that it is utterly immaterial whether re-enforcements that were withheld, or combinations that were not allowed to be made, were expressly promised. If they were not supplied and permitted when they could have been, whether promised or

not, there was a failure in the first duty of a government.

It may be said that the war was new; that the Administration had much to learn; that the whole North was impatient; that Washington was always in danger, or was assumed to be. But there were some things that were not new. It was not new that a general in the field, on a campaign which he has mastered, so far as future movements in war can ever be mastered, knows what is essential to success far better than a government of civilians can know it. This lesson could have been read on many a page of history.

Not to look beyond our own national annals, this lesson had been taught to our fathers and to us in the case of the man who achieved our liberties in the War of the Revolution. There was a time when the Continental Congress learned, from sad experience, that if Washington were not left untrammeled by cabals, were not supported with all the resources that the country could furnish, and made free to act upon his own judgment, the cause of our Independence would be lost. Our Constitution, for many excellent reasons, makes the President commander-in-chief of the armies and navies of the United States. He may, therefore, lawfully direct the movements of armies and of fleets; and when he directs he must be, and always is, obeyed.

But are we never to learn that war is an art which, of all others, requires not only special aptitude, but special training? While no Executive is ever to abdicate a single one of his constitutional functions, there are, and must be, junctures in every great war, in which a wise President will exercise no interference with military plans which he is not personally competent to form, and in which his judgment must necessarily be inferior to that of the general whom he has selected and trusted to conduct a campaign.

The official relations of President Lincoln with General McClellan, through the whole period of the latter's military service after he was called to Washington and invested with a high command, are filled with illustrations of the folly of overruling plans which a general has formed, of dictating his movements, and of refusing or omitting to supply him with resources which could have been furnished. To contend that McClellan, with what the Administration chose to give him, and under the conditions which they imposed upon him, although the latter may have been contrary to his judgment, and the former unequal to his requisitions, ought to have succeeded, and must be pronounced wanting in the characteristics and abilities of a great general because he did not accomplish all that he undertook, is to reverse the only sensible

process of judging between him and his official superiors.

It is not so that he will be estimated in the future; nor is it so that he is even now likely to be estimated by the generation which is already on the stage of life, and which forms the connecting link between those who lived through our civil war and a distant posterity. There are already grown men and women who were infants or were unborn during that terrible struggle, who seek for correct knowledge respecting its incidents and its actors, who are not the slaves of prejudice, who will learn the truth, and will transmit it to the generations that are to come. To them, and to those who are to succeed them, McClellan will be an object of great interest, not only because of his character, but because of the injustice that was done him by his immediate contemporaries; for there is nothing that a generous and just posterity is more prone or more solicitous to do than it is to reverse an unmerited verdict in every case in which contemporary judgment has been wrong. It may, therefore, be confidently predicted that those who are hereafter to review this portion of our history will say of the Federal Administration of 1861–'62 that, placed as they were, they should have disregarded popular clamor, and should have prevented its unreasonable demands from exacting

of a general things that he could not perform if he were not properly seconded and supplied. Leaving out of the account all personal jealousies, as the root of the whole hostility to McClellan on the part of many of the official persons whom he left behind him in Washington, there are two patent facts in regard to his Virginia campaign which stand out in glaring colors.

The first thing that McClellan had to do when he landed upon the Peninsula was to take Yorktown and to free the York River from the Confederate batteries. To this end it was essential that McDowell's corps, the Fifth Army corps, should move on the north bank of the river while McClellan was moving upon Yorktown on the south bank. This plan, which was so absolutely indispensable that the merest tyro ought to have comprehended it, was fully settled before McClellan left Washington. He has himself said that he was promised the co-operation of McDowell's corps. But the promise added nothing to its necessity. After all the troops that McClellan was allowed to take with him had been landed on the Peninsula, McDowell's corps was detached by the Government and was marched to a position where it could do no good, and where it remained for some time inactive. This rendered it necessary for McClellan to remain a whole month on the Peninsula, and to invest

Yorktown by a regular siege, which resulted in his driving the Confederates out of that important position. If he had had McDowell's co-operation, according to the original plan, Yorktown would have been turned, and the Confederate troops which held it, instead of escaping across the Isthmus, would have been captured. Here, then, McClellan was frustrated in the very first step he had contemplated when the Peninsula campaign began—frustrated by the act of his own Government.

Again, when McClellan was encamped on the Chickahominy, preparing to advance upon Richmond, and with every right to expect that McDowell's corps, then pushed forward to within a few miles of McClellan's outposts, would be placed under his control, orders came suddenly from Washington to McDowell that he was not to effect the junction with McClellan. McClellan was immediately attacked by the Confederates, who, as he has always asserted, were in greatly superior force. Without McDowell, McClellan could not make an aggressive advance, and when attacked he could do nothing but rescue his army by the flank movement to the James, through the bloody conflicts of the seven days. There is nowhere recorded in the military history of any government more fatal blunders than these two, which were committed by the

Federal Administration in the spring and summer of 1862.

General McClellan once said to me that Mr. Lincoln was a man of a tender nature, to whom it was very painful to witness suffering, but that he had little vigor of imagination and could not depict to himself suffering that he did not see. Mr. Lincoln's idea of an important battle, the general said, was apt to be measured by the number of men killed and wounded. Suffering in great masses, which he could not see, he did not feel as he did the comparatively few cases which came under his observation when he visited a hospital, where his sympathetic kindness to the sick and wounded was often very touching. It is easy, therefore, to understand at least one reason why Mr. Lincoln did not appreciate that quality in a commander which seeks to accomplish important strategic results with the least expense of life. It is true—too sadly true—that successful warfare renders necessary great destruction of human life. But that people, or their rulers, who make light of the intellectual and moral quality in a general which leads him to shape his strategy so as to accomplish important ends with the least sacrifice of precious lives, commit a great mistake which history must correct if it can over the almost countless graves that are scattered through the land.

It is singular, but it is probably true, that one reason why many persons extend so little sympathy to any vindication of General McClellan's reputation is the unavowed, perhaps unconscious, feeling that the reputation of some other general will be lessened, or that a comparison shows that some other general was his superior. But such persons should remember that there is no comparison needful; that there is no parallel to be drawn between General McClellan and any one else; that all contrast between McClellan and Grant, or between McClellan and any other commander in our late civil war, is entirely out of place, because of a great difference of situation, because McClellan was not, while subsequent commanders were, cordially sustained by the Government, and because in their cases there was no such political and personal hostility as there was in his.

It is not, in my judgment, difficult to sum up General McClellan's true place in history. It will be said of him, I think, finally, that he made it possible for the cause of the Union to triumph in the end. If he had not made the Army of the Potomac what it was and what it continued to be—and no other man could at that time have organized that army as he organized it—if his whole conduct, from first to last, military and political, his example

and his precepts, had not been what they were, the Union could not have been saved and the Constitution would have been lost. Surely this detracts nothing from the merits of any subsequent commander. It asserts nothing that every one should not cheerfully concede, who remembers that McClellan not only rendered great military services, but that he gave the key-note which rallied and kept to the cause of the Union the Democratic support without which the Southern States must have obtained their separate nationality. "If secession is successful," he wrote to President Lincoln, "other dissolutions are clearly to be seen in the future. Let neither military disaster, political faction, nor foreign war, shake your settled purpose to enforce the equal operation of the laws of the United States upon the people of every State."

I do not see how any one can read his letter to President Lincoln, now or hereafter, without being impressed by the intellectual grasp of the whole situation of the Union cause at the time when it was written, which is exhibited in its weighty paragraphs. Whether the comprehensive policy so clearly conceived and so forcibly stated was in all respects the true one is not now and will not hereafter be the question. Men will differ about the comparative merits of the course recommend-

ed by General McClellan and that pursued by the Administration. But there should be no difference of opinion, between persons of judgment, about the statesmanlike power which this letter evinces. When it first saw the light it was almost wholly lost upon the contemporary public, because of the miserable habit of imputing to every conspicuous and important man some selfish object in all that he does. I remember in the newspaper press of that period, after this letter became public, but one serious discussion of the important policy which it suggested, and this was in a journal conducted by a gentleman who was an intimate friend of General McClellan. The newspaper press of both political parties seemed, for the most part, to take it for granted that the letter was designed as a political "campaign document," without any reference to the circumstances under which it was written, or to the time when it became public.

At the close of some papers on General McClellan's services to the Union, which I published in the "North American Review" five years ago, I expressed the hope that his personal memoirs would soon be given to the world. It is known that he had been for several years engaged upon this important work, but it is not yet ascertained in what state he left any part of it. It is un-

derstood, however, that everything now passes into the hands of his accomplished and life-long friend, Mr. William C. Prime.*

WASHINGTON., D. C., *November 14, 1885.*

* Any one who desires to understand what made McClellan so successful in organizing the Army of the Potomac, and how fortunate it was that that great work was intrusted to him, should examine the volume published by Lippincott & Co., at Philadelphia, in October, 1861, under the title of "The Armies of Europe." McClellan's official report of his observations in Europe was originally printed as a Government document, in an inconvenient quarto form. It remained but little known, excepting to military men, until it was brought out in the Philadelphia edition, after he was called to Washington and invested with a high command. It then appeared how immense and minute was his knowledge of the whole art of war in all its multifarious details. A reader who shall examine this work at the present day will appreciate what the Government and people of the United States lost when this officer was put into a condition in which the Union could no longer have his military services.

THE END.

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